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Works of the
Rt Reverend
Warburton, William
Lord Bishop of
Gloucester
Vol VIII.

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OF

VOL. VIII.

JULIAN: *or, A Discourse concerning the Earthquake and Fiery Eruption, which defeated that Emperor's Attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem*: In which the Reality of a Divine Interposition is shewn; the Objections to it are answered; and the Nature of that Evidence, which demands the Assent of every reasonable Man to a Miraculous Fact, is considered and explained.

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J U L I A N:

OR, A

DISCOURSE,

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'HE EARTHQUAKE AND FIERY ERUPTION

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AND THE NATURE OF THAT EVI[illegible]DENCE

HICH DEMANDS THE ASSENT OF EVERY REASONABLE

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IS CONSIDERED AND EXPLAINED.

Nesciunt Necessaria, quia supervacanea dedicerunt.

SENECA.

INTRODUCTION.

A SOVEREIGN Contempt for the authority of the FATHERS, and no great reverence for any other, is what now-a-days constitutes a Protestant in fashion. But, as I imagine Religion loseth somewhat, and Learning a great deal more, by the neglect in which the FATHERS lye at present, I should have been tempted to say a word or two in their behalf, even though the subject of the following sheets did not require that they, whose testimony I make some use of, should have their pretensions fairly stated, and their character examined. But what is here insinuated to the discredit of the *present* mode in theology with regard to the FATHERS is by no means said in favour of the *past*, but of *that* which good sense seems disposed to place between them.

Their authority had now, for many ages, been held *sacred*. Although by taking the Greek philosophy, in which they had been nurtured, for their guide in explaining the nature and genius of the GOSPEL, they had unhappily turned religion into an *art*; which their successors, the SCHOOLMEN, soon after turned into a *trade*. But, as in all matters where reason doth not hold the balance, that authority, which had been extravagantly advanced, was, on the turn of the times,

as extravagantly undervalued: It may not therefore be amiss to acquaint the English reader, in few words, how all this came to pass.

'When the avarice and ambition of the church of Rome had, by working with the superstition and ignorance of the people, erected what it calls the HIERARCHY, which was the digesting an ecclesiastical policy on the ruins of gospel liberty, they found nothing of such use for the administration and support of this spiritual system * as the making the authority of the FATHERS sacred, and consequently decisive. For this church having introduced numerous errors and superstitions, both in rites and doctrines, which the *silence* and the *declarations* of scripture equally condemned, they were obliged to seal up those living oracles, and open this new warehouse of the dead. And it was no wonder if, in that shoal of writers which *the great drag-net of time* (as a poet of our own calls it) had inclosed and brought down to us, under the name of FATHERS, there should be some amongst them of a character suited to countenance any kind of folly or extravagance. Their decisions, therefore, it was thought fit should be treated as laws; and collected into a kind of code, under the title of the *Sentences*.

From this time every thing was tried at the bar of the *fathers*; and so unquestioned was their jurisdiction, that when the great Defection was made from the *Church of Rome*, the Reformed, though they shook off the tyranny of the POPE, could not disengage themselves

* Comme l'autorité fait le fondement de cette étude [la theologie] il est juste de deferer ABSOLUMENT non seulement à *l'Ecriture sainte*, mais encore aux sentimens des *Peres*, qui nous ont expliqué la tradition, sur tout à ceux que l'Eglise a canonisez, pour ainsi dire, par son approbation, en en tout ou en partie. *Traité des etudes monastiques, par Mabillon*, p. 360.

from

from the unbounded authority of the FATHERS; but carried that prejudice with them (as they did some others, of a worse complexion) into the REFORMATION. For, in religious matters, novelty being suspicious, and antiquity venerable, the Reformed thought it for their credit to have the FATHERS on their side. They seemed neither to consider antiquity in general as a thing *relative*, nor Christian-antiquity as a thing *positive:* either of which considerations would have shewn them, that the FATHERS themselves were modern, compared to that authority on which the Reformed founded their churches; and that the GOSPEL was that true antiquity on which they should repose their confidence *. The effect of this error was, that in the long appeal to truth between Protestants and Papists (both of them going on a common principle, that the authority of the FATHERS was decisive), the latter were enabled to prop up their credit against all the evidence of common sense and sacred scripture.

* The Roman Catholics have long objected to us the *antiquity* of their church, as one of its greatest supports. But none of them have been so ingenuous as the excellent author of *L'Esprit des Loix*, to point out wherein the force of this argument consists. "L'antiquité (fays he) convient à la Religion, parce que souvent nous croyons plus les choses à mesure qu'elles sont plus reculées: car nous n'avons pas dans la tête des idées accessoires tirées de ces tems-là qui puissent les contredire." Vol. II. p. 203, 8vo ed. Force we see it has. But then unluckily it lyes in the supposition of Popery's being a *false*, not a *true* church. For though *false* religion acquires an advantage from the oblivion of those discrediting circumstances which attended its original, and of which by *time* we are now deprived; yet *true* religion receives much damage from the same effects of time; because several circumstances, long since lost, which accompanied its birth, must needs have greatly confirmed its character. For it is as much in the nature of things that the circumstances attending truth should confirm it, as that the circumstances attending error should detect it.

At length an excellent writer of the *Reformed* religion, observing that the controversy was likely to be endless (for though the gross corruptions of Popery were certainly later than the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, to which the appeal was usually made, yet the seeds of them being then sown, and beginning to pullulate, it was but too plain there was hold enough for a skilful debater to draw the FATHERS to his own side, and make them water the sprouts they had been planting); M. Daillé, I say, observing this, wisely projected to shift the ground; and force the disputants on both sides to vary their method of attack as well as of defence. In order to this he composed a discourse *Of the true use of the Fathers* *. In which, with admirable learning, and force of argument, he shewed, that the FATHERS were incompetent Deciders of the controversies now on foot; since the points in question were not formed into articles till long after the ages in which those FATHERS lived. This was bringing them from the bench to the table; degrading them from the rank of judges, into the class of simple evidence; in which Daillé too was not for suffering them to speak, like *Irish* Evidence, in every cause where they were wanted, but only to such matters as were agreed to be within their competence. Had this learned critic stopped here, his book had been free from blame; but then in all likelihood his honest purpose had been rendered ineffectual: for old prejudices are not to be set straight by barely reducing the obliquity to that straight line which just restores it to its rectitude. He went much further: and by shewing, occasionally, that they were absurd interpreters of scripture; that they were bad reasoners in morals; and very loose evidence in facts; he seemed willing to have his reader infer, that, even

* *De l'Emploi des Peres.*

though

though they had been masters of their subject, yet these other defects would have rendered them very unqualified deciders.

However, the work of this famous foreigner had great consequences: and especially with us here at home. The more learned amongst the nobility (an order, which, at that time, was of the republic of letters) were the first who emancipated themselves from the general prejudice. It brought the incomparable Lord *Falkland* to think moderately of the FATHERS, and to turn his theological inquiries into a more useful channel. And his great rival in arts, though not in virtue, the famous Lord *Digby*, found it of such use to him, in his defence of the Reformed religion against his cousin Sir *Kenhelm*, that he has even epitomised *l'emploi des Peres*, in his fine Letter on that subject. But, what it hath chiefly to boast is, that it gave birth to the two best defences ever written, on the two best of subjects, *Religion* and *Liberty*; I mean Mr. *Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants*, and Dr. *Jer. Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying*. In a word, it may be truly said to be the storehouse, from whence all who have since written popularly on the character of the FATHERS have derived their materials.

Dr. Whitby, in whose way they fell as *Interpreters of Scripture*, hath, in imitation of the pattern Daillé set him, made a large collection from their writings, to expose their talents for *criticism* *. In the same manner, and in a larger volume, Mr. Barbeyrac afterwards treated their pretensions to the science of *Ethics* †: And now of late the very learned and ingenious Dr. Middleton, finding them in the support of Monkish miracles, hath written as largely to prove

* *Dissert. de S. S. interpretatione secund. Patres.*

† *La Morale des Peres, &c.*

their *testimony* in matters of fact to be none of the strongest.

So that these several constituent parts of their character being thus taken up in their turns; and the whole order exposed, as incompetent judges of doctrine, as trifling interpreters of scripture, as bad moralists, and as slippery evidence; it is no wonder the English reader, who only measures them by such representations, should be disposed to think very irreverently of these early lights of the Christian Church.

But, let us divest ourselves of prejudice, whether we think with the few or the many; and we shall soon understand that in the heat of a contention evidence will be apt to be overrated. Nay, when fairly estimated, no reflecting man will think himself able to form a true judgment of a character, when no more of it is laid before him than a collection of its blots and blemishes.

Till of late, there were always some who could preserve their candour and moderation, which in religion and politics, where our highest interests are concerned, is no easy matter; and these men were wont to say, "That though we should indeed suppose the fathers to be as fanciful divines, as bad critics, and as unsafe moralists, as Daillé, Whitby, and Barbeyrac, are pleased to represent them, yet this would take little from the integrity of their evidence: and what we want of them is only their testimony to facts." But now, even this small remain of credit is thought too much to be allowed them; and, of this, the learned author of the *Free Inquiry*, by exposing their excessive credulity in point of false miracles*, hath laboured to deprive

* "Vid mus, quanto dignitatis detrimento hic error credendi "recipiendique omnia facilitas afflecerit ex ecclesiasticis historiis "nonnullas;

deprive them. But, controversy apart, their testimony to *common facts* may yet stand good. I see no reason why their veracity should be brought in question when they bear witness to the state of religion in their own times, because they disgraced their judgment, in giving ear to every strange tale of Monkish extraction. The most learned and virtuous divine of the barbarous ages is the venerable Bede; and the honestest as well as most discerning historian of those, or perhaps of any age, is Matthew Paris: yet their propensity to recount the wonderful exceeds all imagination. Neither learning, judgment, nôr integrity, could secure them against the general contagion. Now, if this disposition was in them (as is confessed) only the vice of the *times*, is it not unjust to ascribe the same disposition in the *fathers*, to the vice of the *men?*

But our folly has ever been, and is likely to continue, to judge of antiquity by a modern standard: when, if we would form reasonable ideas of it, we should weigh it with its own. We examine the *conceits* of a BASIL or an AUSTIN, on the test of the improved reasoning of our own times. And we do well. It is the way to read them with profit. But when, from a contempt of their logic, which follows this comparison, we come to despise their other accomplishments of parts and learning, we betray gross ignorance or injustice. To know the true value of the *fathers*, we should place them by their contemporaries, the Pagan writers of greatest estimation; and if they suffer in their neighbourhood; e'en let them stay, where most of them already are, with the grocers. But it is a fact none

" nonnullas; quæ nimis faciles se præbuerunt, in prodendis trans-
" cribendisque miraculis, à martyribus, eremitis, anachoretis, et
" aliis sanctis viris, atque ab eorum reliquiis, sepulcris, sacellis,
" imaginibus editis." *Bacon de Augm. Scien.*

none acquainted with antiquity will deny, how great a secret soever modern divines may make of it, that as *polite scholars* (which is the thing their despisers now most affect to value) the Christian writers have indisputably the advantage, both in eloquence and ethics. And we may venture to say that there are some of them who have successively rivaled the best writers of the higher and purer antiquity. St. Chrysostome has more good sense than Plato; and the critic may find in Lactantius almost as many good words as in Tully. So that if, on the principles of a classical taste, we discard the *fathers*, we should send along with them the *Pagan writers* of the same ages; unless the wonderful theology of the latter can atone for (what they both have in common) their false rhetoric and bad reasoning.

These imperfections, therefore, in both, being equal, it is plain they were the faults of the times. For whatever advantages the ancients had over us in the arts of poetry, oratory, and history, it is certain, we have over them in the *science of reasoning*, as far as it concerns the investigation of moral truth.

Those who are not able to form a comparison between them, on their own knowledge, may be reconciled to this conclusion, when the *peculiar hindrances*, in the ancient world, to the advancement of moral truth, on the principles of a just logic, have been laid before them.

The cultivation of the art of reasoning was, in the most early times of learning, in the hands of their ORATORS and SOPHISTS. Whatever was the profession, the real business of the *orator* was not to convince, but to persuade; and not in favour of truth, but of convenience or utility: which, again, was not general utility (for that coincides with truth), but

particular; which is often at variance with it. So that their art of reasoning was as much an art to *hinder* the discovery of truth*, as to *promote* it. Nor was that part which was employed in the support of error merely lost to the service of truth. The mischief went further. It brought in many fallacious rules and modes of reasoning, which greatly embarrassed and misled the advocate when employed in a better cause. Particularly those by *similitude* and *analogy:* which had their rise from hence; and soon spread, like a leprosy, over all the argumentation of antiquity.

We need not wonder then, if under this management truth was rarely found. What seems to be more wonderful is, that, when it was found, its value was so little understood that it was as frequently sacrificed to the empty *vanity*, as to the more solid *interests* of the disputer. For the *sophists*, the speculative inquirers after truth, made their wisdom (from whence they took their name) to consist in bringing truth to the side of their reasoning; not their reasoning to the side of truth. Hence it became the glory of their profession to demonstrate for, or against any opinion, indifferently: and they were never better pleased than when that proposition (let it be what it would) was prescribed to them for their subject, which their auditors had a mind should be the truth. The difficulties they frequently had to encounter, in support of so extravagant a character, introduced into the ancient reasoning new modes of fallacies, a set of *metaphysical quibbles*; which being the invention of these SOPHISTS, or *wise men*, are fitted only to impose on others as *wise*.

* Ubi verò animis judicum vis afferenda est, et ab ipsa veri contemplatione abducenda mens, IDI PROPRIUM ORATORIS OPUS EST. Quint. l. vi. c. ii.

But

But though so much had been done to betray, to discredit, and to estrange us from truth; yet common sense revolts against every thing when it becomes, to a certain degree, unnatural. This insolent abuse of reason, now proceeding to an open mockery of truth, brought the *sophists* into public contempt; and gave room to another set of men, of a modester denomination, to raise themselves upon their ruins.

These were the PHILOSOPHERS: and to these, it must be owned, the Gentile world owed all its real improvements in the art of reasoning, and advancement in truth. But the defects of their constitution, the errors of their principles, and the folly of their conduct, were so great, that truth was kept in that state of inferiority, in which, we say, it came to and was unhappily espoused by the *fathers*. It would ill suit the confined nature of this discourse to explain these things at large: we can only hint at some of the most considerable of their errors.

They soon ran into the two extremes, of *scepticism* and *dogmatizing*; of all other, the two disorders of the mind, most hurtful to sound reason. These maladies they contracted of the stock from which they sprung, the *sophists:* who, by their custom of disputing for and against every thing, brought every thing, in its turn, according to the temper of the recipients, to be firmly embraced, or wantonly suspected. For extremes *often* beget, and, when they have begot, *always* support one another.

A second violation of right reason was that principle, which they all held in common, *that truth was ever to give place to utility*. A principle which had the appearance of modesty, as seeming only to imply what is too true, that we are less able to judge of *causes* than *effects*; but, indeed, the natural issue of

th

the inveteracy and absurdity of popular Paganism, and of its incorporation with the state.

Another principle as universal, and no less injurious to the rights of reason, was that the fundamental doctrines of each sect were to be held unquestioned by its followers. For, in most societies, truth is but the second care; the *first* is to provide for themselves: and as this can be done only by uniformity of opinions, and opinions will continue no longer uniform than while they remain unquestioned, an *ipse dixit* was the *rule* of all, though the *badge* only of a single sect. These several defects in the constitution of ancient *philosophy* had, in course of time, brought on others. The dogmatists, as was natural, grew *enthusiastic*; and the sceptics *immoral*. The two worst disorders that can befall a searcher after truth; for her abode is neither in the clouds, nor on the dung-hill.

Take then all these things together, and we shall see, they must be insuperable bars to any great improvement, in the science of moral reasoning.

But to this it will be said, that those two famous instruments of truth, LOGIC and MATHEMATICS, were, the one invented, and the other highly advanced, in these very ages. It is certain they were. But if the plain truth may be told, the use of these boasted instruments goes no further than to assist us, the one in the FORM of *reasoning*, the other in the METHOD of *discourse*.

Aristotle's invention of the *Categories* was a surprising effort of human wit. But, in practice, *logic* is more a *trick* than a *science*, formed rather to amuse than to instruct. And, in some sort, we may apply to the *art of syllogism* what a man of wit * has ob-

* Butler.

served

served of *rhetoric*, that it only tells us how to *name* those tools, which nature had before put into our hands, and habit taught the use of. However, all its real virtue consists in the *compendious* detection of a fallacy. This is all the service it can do for truth. In the service of Chicane, indeed, it is a mere juggler's knot, now fast, now loose; and the *schools*, where this legerdemain was exercised in great perfection, are full of the stories of its wonders. But its true value is now well known: and there is but little need to put it lower in the general estimation.

However, what *logic* hath lost of its credit, *mathematics* have gained. And *geometry* is now supposed to do wonders as well in the system of man as of matter. It must be owned, the real virtue it hath, it had acquired long since: for, by what is left us of antiquity, we see how elegantly it was then handled, and how sublimely it was pursued. But the truth is, all its use, for the purpose in question, besides what hath been already mentioned, seems to be only habituating the mind to think long and closely: and it would be well if this advantage made amends for some inconveniencies, as inseparable from its study. It may seem perhaps too much a paradox to say, that long habit in this science incapacitates the mind for reasoning at large, and especially in the search of moral truth. And yet, I believe, nothing is more certain. The object of geometry is demonstration; its subject admits of it, and is almost the only subject that doth. In this science, whatever is not demonstration, goes for nothing; or is at least below the sublime inquirer's regard. *Probability*, through its almost infinite degrees, from simple doubt up to absolute certainty, is the *terra incognita* of the geometer. And yet here it is that the great business of the human

human mind, the search and discovery of all the important truths which concern us as reasonable beings, is carried on. And here too it is that all its vigour is exerted: for to proportion the assent to the probability accompanying every varying degree of moral evidence, requires the most enlarged and sovereign exercise of reason. But, as to excel in the use of any thing, the habit must always be in proportion to the difficulty, it seems very unlikely that the *geometer* (long confined to the routine of demonstration, the easiest exercise of reason, where much less of the vigour than of the attention of mind is required to excel), should form a right judgment on subjects, whose truth or falsehood is to be rated on the degrees of moral evidence. I venture to call mathematics the easiest exercise of reason, on the authority of Cicero, who observes, *that scarce any man ever set himself upon this study, who did not make what progress in it he pleased**. But besides acquired inability, prejudice renders the veteran mathematician still less capable of judging of moral evidence. He who hath been so long accustomed to lay together and compare ideas, and hath reaped demonstration, the richest fruit of speculative truth, for his labour, regards all the lower degrees of evidence as in the trainonly of his mathematical principality: and he commonly ranks them in so arbitrary a manner, that the *ratio ultima mathematicorum* is become almost as great a libel upon common sense, as other sovereign decisions. I might appeal, for the truth of this, to those wonderful conclusions which

* Quis ignorat, ii, qui mathematici vocantur, quanta in obscuritate rerum, et quam recondita in arte et multiplici, subtilique versentur? quo tamen in genere ita multi perfecti homines exisierunt, ut nemo fere studuisse ei scientiæ vehementius videatur, quin quod voluerit, consecutus sit. De Orat. l. i.

geometers,

geometers, when condescending to write on history, ethics, or theology, have made from their premisses. But the thing is notorious: and it is now no secret that the oldest mathematician in England is the worst reasoner in it. But I would not be mistaken, as undervaluing the many useful discoveries made from time to time in moral matters by professed mathematicians. Nor will any one so mistake me, who does not first confound the genius and the geometer; and then conclude that what was the atchievement of his wit, was the product of his theorems.

Yet still it must be owned, that this discipline habituates the mind to think closely; and may help us to a good method of composition. In those most unpromising ages, when the *forms* of the schools were as tedious and intricate, as the *matter* they treated was absurd or trifling, it hath had force enough to break through the bondage of custom, and to clear away the thorns that then perplexed and overgrew the paths of learning. Thomas Bradwardin, a mathematician, and archbishop of Canterbury, in the fourteenth century, in his famous book *De causa Dei*, hath treated his subject, not as it was wont to be handled in the schools, but in the better method of the geometers. And in another instance, of more importance, he hath given the age he lived in an example to emancipate itself from the slavery of fashion; I mean, in his attempt (as by his freedom with the *fathers* it seems to be) of reducing their extravagant authority to more reasonable bounds. But yet, so true is the foregoing observation, that though mathematics, in good hands, could do this, it could do no more: all the opening it gave to truth could not secure Bradwardin from the dishonour of becoming advocate for the most absurd opinion that ever was, the *Anti-Pelagian* doctrine of St. Austin;

St. Austin; in which the good archbishop was so much in earnest, that he calls the defence of it, *the cause of God.*

To return. Such was the state and condition of the human understanding in the ancient world, rather a *mechanical* than a moral or intellectual cultivation of reason, when CHRISTIANITY arose; and on such principles as were best fitted to correct those errors and prejudices, which had so long and so fatally retarded the progress of truth. It would require a just volume to treat this matter as it deserves. The nature of my work will not permit me to do it. I shall only give a single instance, but an instance of importance, namely, the use of those principles in discovering the true *end* of man; and in directing him to the right *mean* of attaining it.

The knowledge of the ONE GOD, as the moral and immediate Governor of the Universe, directly leads us to the *Supreme Good*; and the doctrine of FAITH in Him, directly inspiring the *love of truth*, enables us to procure it.

In Paganism, the *end* was totally obscured, by its having alway kept the true God, the supreme good, out of sight, which therefore must be needs sought in vain; and the true *mean* entirely lost, by the introduction of a number of false ones.

These were amongst the great principles revealed by heaven for the advancement of *moral knowledge:* and in time they had their effect: though indeed somewhat with the latest. For it is not to be dissembled, that here, as in most other cases in the moral world, the perversity of man soon ran counter to God's good Providence; which had so admirably fitted and disposed things for a general reform.

I have said the *fathers* were, at least, equal, if not,

superior, to those Gentile writers, their contemporaries, whom we most affect to admire: I shall now explain the unhappy causes (in which *Religion* and *Reason* suffered equally, as they always will suffer together) why the fathers did not, in the exactness of their *logic*, and in the purity of their *ethics*, infinitely surpass them.

The first preachers of the Gospel were the inspired messengers of the WORD. They committed its dictates to writing; and with that purity and splendor in which they drew them from the fountain of truth.

Their immediate followers, whom we are wont to call the *apostolic fathers*, received at their hands the doctrine of life, in all the simplicity of *understanding* as well as *heart*. It cannot be said that their writings do much honour to the rational sublimity of our holy religion: but then they have not hurt or violated the integrity of sacred truth. For *false philosophy* had not yet made havock of the *faith*. If, in their writings, we see but little of that manly elegance of reason, which makes the writings of their inspired predecessors so truly admirable; and is so striking a proof of the reality of that inspiration: yet still there is as little of those adulterate and polluted ornaments, which their successors brought from the brothels of Pagan philosophy, to stain the sanctity of religion. And let me add, that though the early prospect of things may not be, in all respects, what we could wish it; yet there is one circumstance, which does great credit to our holy faith: It is this, that as the integrity and dignity of its simple and perfect nature refused all fellowship with the adulterate arts of Grecian learning; so the admirable display of divine wisdom in disposing the parts, and conducting the course of the grand system of redemption, was not to be tolerably apprehended but by an improved and

and well-disciplined understanding. Both these qualities suited the nobility of its original. It could bear no communion with *error*; and was as little fitted to consort with *ignorance*.

The men of *science* were not the first who attended to the call of the Gospel. It was not to be expected they should be the first. Their station presented many prejudices against it. It was taught by simple unlettered men, whose condition they held in contempt; and it required that they, who had been till now the teachers of mankind, should become learners. The doctrines of the Gospel had indeed this to recommend them, that they were *rational*; but the philosophers were already no strangers to those principles of natural religion which Christianity adopted, such as the unity of the Godhead, his moral government, and the essential difference between good and evil. The *attestations* to its truth were wonderful; but these, their principles of false philosophy enabled them to evade: so that their passions and prejudices, for some time, supported them in holding out against all the conviction of gospel-evidence.

But it was not thus with plainer men. They submitted to its force with less reluctance. Philosophy had secreted from the prophane vulgar the high truths of natural law, which is taught to the initiated concerning the one true God and his worship. When the Gospel openly proclaimed these truths, with others of the like repose and comfort to the human mind, these *prophane vulgar* eagerly embraced it. And as Grecian wisdom could not keep them from believing what was thus revealed; so neither did that wisdom, falsely so called, tempt them to viciate it, after they had embraced it. They were apt, indeed, to run into the opposite extreme, and, reflecting of how little use phi-

losophy had ever been to the body of mankind, and how violently it now opposed the new religion, which had the body of mankind for its object, they became much disposed to avoid or neglect all prophane literature, without distinction. They saw, in the power of miracles, a more efficacious way of propagating the faith: and they thought they saw, in St. Paul's censure of the Grecian wisdom, the condemnation of all human literature, in general. St. Paul had himself abstained from their meretricious eloquence, and had cautioned posterity against their magical philosophy. The *first*, lest it should occasion a suspicion that the faith had made its way rather by the arts of human speech, than by the power of the spirit: The *latter*, because he saw it was fatally framed to infect religion; and had some experience, and more divine foreknowledge, that it would speedily do so.

Indeed the time was at hand. For the convictive evidence and rapid progress of the Gospel had so shaken and disconcerted learned pride, that the next age saw a torrent of believers pour into the church, from the schools of their rhetors, the colleges of their philosophers, and the cloisters of their priests. The sincerity of these illustrious converts in embracing a religion which did not hold out, so much as in distant prospect, any advantages of the temporal kind, cannot be fairly brought in question. Their discretion, their prudence, were the things most wanted. For that passion of new converts, *zeal*, which is then least under the direction of *knowledge* when zeal most needs it, hindered them from making their *advantages* of the principles of revelation; so admirably fitted, as we have shewn, to improve human nature on that side where its perfection lies, I mean, in the high attainments of moral science. For, instead of reasoning from

from truths clearly revealed, and so, from things known, to advance, by due degrees, in the method of the mathematicians, to the discovery of truths unknown, They travested obscure uncertainties, nay, manifest errors, into truth; and sought in philosophy and logic, analogies and quibbles to support them.

Their two great objects, as became them, were to increase the number of believers; and to defend the faith against infidels and heretics.

Amongst the means they employed for the speedy conversion of the world, one was to bring Christianity as near to the genius of the *Gentile religion*, and of the *Greek philosophy*, as could be done without giving offence to themselves or their brethren. They thought it but prudent to avail themselves of the prejudices of Paganism; and perhaps they themselves were not free from all remains of those prejudices. The Jewish law, ill understood, satisfied them in the propriety of these means. They saw there, compliances made by God himself to the prejudices and superstitions of the times. But this was all they saw: They did not reflect that a local worship, instituted for peculiar and temporary ends, was to be conducted on maxims different from what was required in an universal religion, erected on the general principles of spirit and truth. They did not reflect that *one* mean was to be pursued when the end was to keep a chosen family from the contagion of idol worship; and *another* when an idolatrous world was to be invited to the profession of SAVING FAITH.

It is very observable, that, while the *fathers* were thus dishonouring Christianity by giving it the fashionable air of Paganism, the *philosophers*, on their side, were as busy in reforming and purifying their systems on the model of the great truths of Revelation*.

* See the Divine Legation.

And, what is yet more strange, this mutual approach still kept them at an irreconciled distance. For the advances on both sides were made for no other end than that each might the better keep their own ground; the *philosophers*, by conciliating the reason; the *fathers*, by indulging the passions; into which various conduct they were alike betrayed by the condition of our common nature, unable either to bear pure and simple truth, or gross and undisguised error.

There were two things in Paganism, which, as they excited and kept up that amusing exercise of the mind, *admiration*, did, more strongly than any else, hold the people attached to idolatry; and these were MYSTERIOUS RITES and HIDDEN DOCTRINES.

One would have thought it hard to find an equivalent for these in so simple and perfect a religion as the Christian; yet the figurative expressions used in the institution of the *Lord's supper*, and the frequent mention of mysteries throughout the New Testament (though it be of mysteries which the genius of the gospel had *revealed* and *explained*, not of mysteries which it invented and kept hidden), gave occasion to accommodators to ancient prejudices to speak of the *last supper* as a mysterious rite, to which they ventured to apply all the terms in use at the celebration of the Pagan mysteries; and to speak of REDEMPTION as of one of those hidden doctrines, which the fanatic *Platonists* of that time boasted they had in trust, for the purification and advancement of human nature.

This will account for a circumstance that never fails of giving scandal to the readers of Church-history: which is, that the principles and doctrines of the ancient *Heretics* were infinitely more shocking and absurd than those of any modern *sectaries*. The reason (we see) is, that the ancient Heretics formed their tenets

tenets on the principles of *Pagan philosophy*; while the modern sectaries form theirs on the books of *sacred Scripture*. And though the one was on philosophy reformed and purified, and the other is on the Bible perverted and misunderstood, yet the difference in favour of the latter becomes immense.

This mysterious genius of Paganism, together with its popular absurdities, naturally produced a method of teaching, which always pleases the imagination in proportion as it disgusts the judgment, that is to say, the use of *allegory*. A practice, excellently fitted to cover the early follies of *vulgar* Gentilism, and to ornament the late knaveries of the *philosophic*; but very abhorrent of the genius of Christianity, where every doctrine was rational, and therefore every rite should have been plain and open. Yet as allegory was become the general vehicle of instruction, and that which particularly distinguished the school of *Plato*; the FATHERS, who leaned most towards that sect, thought fit to go into that fashionable mode. They allegorized every thing; and their success was such as might be expected from so absurd an accommodation. Here again they were misled in their ignorance of the nature of the Jewish law: a law full of allegories, and figurative representations. And with great propriety so, as that religion was dependent on, and preparatory to the *Gospel:* which, being its *end* and completion, required to have some shadow of itself delineated in the steps which led to it. But this, which shews the use of allegories to be reasonable in the *Old Testament*, shews the folly of expecting them in the *New*. For when the substance was advanced, and placed in full light, the shadow was of course to be cast behind. Yet, by the most unaccountable perversity, the very reason which the apostle gives for the necessity of

interpreting the *law* figuratively, that *the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*, was made the authority for using the *Gospel* in the same manner.

We have said, that the school to which the FATHERS chiefly inclined, was the *Academy*. There is a passage in St. Austin, which shews to what excess the authority of Plato was carried. In his *Confessions*, he returns thanks to God for having made the books of Plato an instrument of redeeming him from the errors of *Manicheism*. His partialities for that philosopher must have strangely blinded him; for, humanly speaking, nothing could have more contributed to keep him a Manichean than the doctrines of Plato, who held two coeternal principles, *God* and *matter*, and that the latter was the cause of evil. This fondness for the academy arose partly from its being the philosophy in vogue, and partly because (in consequence of that) several of the fathers came from that school into the church; but chiefly because they had entertained greater hopes of bringing over the Platonists to the faith, which, as Plato was in the highest credit, would be deemed a victory over philosophy in general. What they seemed to ground their hopes upon was the sceptical disposition of the academy as in its first institution. The earlier Platonists professed to seek truth; and were not ashamed to own they could not find it. It was therefore imagined they would gladly receive it, in doctrines so rationally deduced, and so clearly revealed. But in this they were deceived: for uncertainty is not the *state and condition* of the sceptic's knowledge, but the *principle and the genius* of it, and it was departing from the fundamental laws of their profession to acknowledge any thing certain. As for the enthusiastic part of this sect, which was now daily getting ground, the *magic* to which they were so madly given, kept them confined

confined within its circle. This, and some manifest mischiefs, which even the warmest of the *fathers* could not but perceive, made them ever and anon, when in ill humour with a heretic, to execrate the schools of *Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras*, &c. and denounce each of them, in their turns, to be the great nurseries of error: as Tertullian did of the chief of them, who calls *Plato the common cook and seasoner of heresy**. But, falsely supposing that the evil arose from this or that particular sect, when it had its root in the constitution of them all, they went on exclaiming against their *particular doctrines*, and theologizing and reasoning on their *general principles*. We say the fathers would sometimes call the Greek philosophy the nursery of heresy. Nothing is more true And yet all the difference between the *orthodox* and the *heretics*, as far as concerned their application of philosophy to religion, was only from less to more. The orthodox employed it to *explain* articles of faith; and the heretics to *invent* them.

Thus much for a taste of the *didactic* theology of the fathers. Their *polemic* savoured as strongly of the same impure mixture. For, the form of argument, and force of confutation, came from the same shops: from the teaching *rhetors*, they learnt the art of reasoning by *similitudes* and *analogies*; from the talking *orators*, that capital argument, called, *ad hominem*; and from the wrangling *philosophers* of the academy, the address of *using any sort of principles*, to support their own opinions, or confute their adversaries. The three lasting bars to the discovery and advancement of truth.

But matters still grew from bad to worse; till one black cloud of blind credulity had over-spread the Western world: this soon brought on a spiritual

* Omnium Hæreticorum condimentarium.

dominion,

dominion, which took advantage of the confusions occasioned by the continued inroads of fierce barbarians, to strike its roots deep and wide into the fat and lumpish soil of Gothic ignorance. For as a *temporal* tyranny supports itself by corrupt *manners*, so a *spiritual* establisheth it's usurpation by corrupt *doctrines*. And, as in large empires subject to the temporal, the luxury of vice runs into *delicacies*; so, in those subject to the spiritual, the absurdity of doctrines hides itself in *subtilties*. Hence the original of the SCHOOLMEN's art; as we find it completed in the PERIPATETIC code of *sums* and *sentences*. And this was in the order of things: that what the *fanatic visions* of the *platonic* philosophy had brought into the faith, the *frigid subtilties* of the *Aristotelian* should support *. And it is observable, that the use the *schoolmen* made of their disputatious genius, was just the same the *sophists* had made before them. For triumphant dulness commonly grows wanton in the exercise of imputed wit †. And the *Sic* and *Non* of *Peter Abelard* was now as famous as heretofore the προβάλλετε of *Gorgias*.

At length truth shot its ray into this chaos of disordered reason: but it came not directly from it's source; but

* It is remarkable, that the *Mahometan Arabs*, by the assistance of the *same* philosophy, invented the same kind of *scholastic theology*: and, as with superior refinement, in proportion to the subtiler wits of that people; so, with better judgment: for that which obscures reason, will always be a cover for absurdity.

† It was held disgraceful when the *subtile* Doctor was so pressed by his opponent as to have no other way of extricating himself than by quoting Scripture (an expedient, in his ideas, like that of introducing *the God in the Machine*, which bungling poets were wont to have recourse to). M. Menage tells us he found the following entry in the register of the faculty at Paris—" *Solida* " *die* sexta Julii ab Aurora ad vesperam fuit disputatum, et " quidem tam SUBTILITER, *ut ne verbum quidem de tota scrip-* " *tura fuerit allegatum.*"

from

from the ferment of such passions as error and corruption are apt to raise amongst those who govern in, and benefit by, that state of confusion. For when a reform happens to arise from within, it cannot be supposed to have its birth in a *love* of truth; hardly, in the *knowledge* of it. Generally, some corrupt passion gratifies itself by decrying the grosser errors, supported by, and supporting, those it hates. The machine thus set a-going, truth hath fair play: she is now in turn to procure friends, and to attach them to her service. This was the case in the revolution we are about to speak of; and is the case of religious reformations in general. For if, in the state of such established error, Providence was to wait till a love of truth had set men upon shaking off their bondage, its dispensations could never provide that timely aid, which we now find they always do to distressed humanity. For when the corruption hath spread so wide, as to make truth, if by chance she could be found, an indifferent object; what is there left, to enable men to break their fetters, but the clashing interests of the corruption itself? And it is knowing as little of the *religious*, as of the *moral* course of God's providence, to upbraid those, who have profited of this blessing, with the *baseness* of the instruments that procured it *.

However, the love of truth came afterwards in aid of those, whom St. Paul himself did not think fit to discourage, such as *preach Christ even of envy and strife*, to carry on the work of reformation. For

* " Si on veut réduire les causes des progres de la réforme à " des principes simples, on verra, qu'en Allemagne ce fut " l'Ouvrage de l'Interêt, en Angleterre celui de l'Amour ; et en " France celui de la Nouveauté, ou peut-être d'une Chanson." Voiez, *Memoirs pour servir à l'Histoire de Brandebourg de main de Maitre*, p. 27.

though

though the *grossness* of the corruptions did not straightway make them *suspected*; yet, being tyrannically imposed, they soon became *hated*; and that hatred brought on the enquiry; which never ceased but with their detection. And then, those, whose honesty and courage emboldened them to make a secession from an Anti-Christian Church, found no way of standing in their new-recovered liberty, but by supplying their want of power with a superior share of knowledge.

To this every thing contributed. They were led, even by the spirit of opposition, to the fountain of truth, the Scriptures; from which they had been so long and violently excluded. And the Scriptures, as we observed, had, amongst their other advantages, this peculiar virtue, to direct and enlarge the mind; by providing it with such objects as were best suited for its contemplation; and presenting them in such lights as most readily promoted its improvement by them. Such too was the gracious disposition of Heaven, that, at the very time these servants of truth were breaking open the recovered treasury of holy writ, the largest source of human learning was ready to pour in upon them. For a powerful nation of fierce enthusiasts, the enemies of the Christian name, had just driven Grecian literature from its natives eats, and forced it to take refuge in the North West of Europe.

How admirable are the ways of Providence! and how illustrious was this dispensation! It directed the independent, the various, and the contrary revolutions of *these times*, to rectify the mischiefs occasioned by the *past*: whereby that very learning, which, in the first ages, had been perverted to corrupt Christianity, was now employed to purify and restore it: that very philosophy, which had been adopted to invent and explain articles of faith, was now studied only to instruct

struct us in the history of the human mind, and to assist us in developing its faculties, and regulating its operations: and those very systems which had supported the whole body of *school divinity*, now afforded the principles proper to overturn it.

But in the course of this reform, it was not enough that the bad logic, on which the school-determinations rested, should be reduced to its just value. The service of truth required the invention of a better. A better was invented: and the superiority that followed from its use was immediately felt: So that our adversaries were soon reduced to avail themselves of the same advantages. Thus the true science of humanity opened and enlarged itself: It spread and penetrated through every quarter; till it arrived at that distinguished height in which we place the true glory of these later ages.

The advantage of the *modern* over *ancient* times, in the successful pursuit of moral science, is now generally acknowledged. And the impartial reader, who hath attended to these brief reflections, will, we presume, find no other cause, to which it can be so reasonably ascribed, as to the *genius* and the *constitution* of the Christian religion; whose *doctrines* reveal the great principles of moral truth; and whose *discipline* establishes a ministry consecrated to its support and service.

It is true, indeed, the concurrence of several cross accidents had for many ages deprived the world of these advantages: They had defeated the natural virtue and efficacy of the *doctrines*; and rendered the *discipline* vain and useless. For these two parts of the Christian system cannot act but in conjunction: separate them, and its doctrines will abound in *enthusiasms*, and its discipline, in *superstitions*. But now, since

since the cold and heavy incumbrance of *human inventions* hath been removed out of the *Lord's vineyard,* the ministers of religion have been enabled to produce that fruit which, from the beginning, they were enabled to cultivate and mature. So that greater improvements were made, during the last two hundred years, in the science of humanity, than in all the preceding ages put together.

Nor let any one, from what he may have seen not very conformable to these ideas, suspect the truth of this representation. It was never pretended that these advantages prevailed equally or constantly in all places, to which the influence of their causes had reached. As time would improve them in some, so it would impair them in others. All nature is in a constant flux, and every modification of it, however circumstanced, when considered locally, must have its period; and such as are most valuable, have, very often, the quickest. Of the advantages spoken of above, THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND had made the best use: and the *system of man,* that is, of ethics and theology, had received there almost as many improvements, as the *system of nature,* amongst the same people, hath done since. It would have received more but for the evil influence which the corrupt and mistaken politics of those times have had upon it. For politics have ever had great effects on science. And this is natural. What is strange in the story is, that these studies gradually decay under an improved Constitution. Insomuch that there is now neither force enough in the public genius to emulate their forefathers; nor sense enough to understand the use of their discoveries. It would be an invidious task to enquire into the causes of this degeneracy. It is sufficient, for our humiliation, that we feel the effects.

fects. Not that we must suppose, there was nothing to dishonour the happier times which went before: there were too many: but then the mischiefs were well repaired by the abundance of the surrounding blessings. This church, like a fair and vigorous tree, once teemed with the richest and noblest burthen. And though, together with its best fruits, it pushed out some hurtful suckers, receding every way from the mother plant; crooked and mishapen, if you will, and obscuring and eclipsing the beauty of its stem; yet still there was something in their height and verdure which bespoke the generosity of the stock they rose from. She is now seen under all the marks of a total decay: her top scorched and blasted, her chief branches bare and barren, and nothing remaining of that comeliness which once invited the whole continent to her shade. The chief sign of life she now gives is the exsuding from her sickly trunk a number of deformed funguses; which call themselves of her, because they stick upon her surface, and suck out the little remains of her sap and spirits.

To conclude: my more immediate concern in these observations was to justify the FATHERS from the injurious contempt under which they now lye. But, in the course of this apology, I have endeavoured to serve a greater purpose; which was, to vindicate our holy Religion from its supposed impotency and incapacity to direct and enlarge the reasoning faculties, in the discovery and advancement of moral truth.

So far then as to the *genius and literary talents* of the *Fathers*: their *moral* character is a distinct question; and would well bear, and does deserve a full examination. But I have already gone beyond my limits. However, this I may venture to say, that the men most prejudiced against them, though they talk, will

will never be able to prove, that the *Fathers* had an immoral intention to deceive. If there be any learned man who thinks otherwise, I would advise him, before he attempts to prosecute this charge against them, to weigh well the force of the following remark, though made on somewhat a different occasion. "Whenever" (says the fine author of the *Spirit of Laws*) "one observes, in any age or government, "the several bodies in a community intent on aug- "menting their own authority, and vigilant to procure "certain advantages to themselves exclusive of each "other's pretensions, we should run a very great "chance of being deceived if we regarded these at- "tempts as a certain mark of their corruptions. By "an unhappiness inseparable from the condition of "humanity, moderation is a rare virtue in men of "superior talents. And as it is always more easy to "push on force in the direction in which it moves, "than to stop or divert its moment; perhaps, in the "class of superior geniuses, you will sooner find men "extremely virtuous, than extremely prudent*."

* Lorsque dans un siécle, ou dans un gouvernement, on voit les divers corps de l'etat chercher à augmenter leur autorité, & à prendre les uns sur les autres de certains avantages, on se tromperoit souvent, si l'on regardoit leurs entreprises, comme une marque certaine de leur corruption. Par un malheur attaché à la condition humaine, les Grands-hommes modérés sont rares; & comme il est toûjours plus aisé de suivre sa force que de l'arrêter, peut-être dans la classe des gens superieurs, est-il plus facile, de trouver des gens extremement vertueux, que les hommes extremement sages. L'Esprit des Loix, V. II. p. 334. 8vo edit.

A DIS-

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE ATTEMPT OF THE EMPEROR

JULIAN

TO REBUILD THE

TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK I.

IN reflecting on the state of this new controversy, concerning MIRACLES, *two* things seemed to be wanting, though very useful to oppose to the insinuations of licentious readers, who are commonly more forward to come to a conclusion than the disputants themselves; the *one* was, to shew that *all* the miracles recorded in *church-history* are *not* forgeries or delusions: The *other*, that the evidence of most of them doth *not* stand on the same foot of credit with the miracles recorded in *Gospel-history*. For most theological debates amongst churchmen, notwithstanding the service they do to truth, occasion this sensible mischief to the people, that the enemies of religion spread abroad *their own* consequences from them, as the consequences of the *doctrines advanced*, how contrary soever to the express reasonings and declarations of the parties concerned.

To obviate therefore the ABUSES arising from the management of the present question, I have taken

upon me to *defend* A MIRACLE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY; and to *enquire into the nature of that evidence, which will demand the assent of every reasonable man to a miraculous fact.*

The first part of this plan is prosecuted in the following sheets; The second will afford a subject for another discourse.

My chief purpose here is to prove the miraculous interposition of Providence, in defeating the attempt of JULIAN to rebuild the TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

As my design in writing is in behalf of our common Christianity, and not to support or to discredit the particular doctrines of this or that church or age; I have taken for my subject a miracle worked by the immediate hand of God, and not through the agency of his servants.

So that, whether the power of miracles as exercised by the apostles, and their first followers, ceased with them, or was conveyed to their successors of the next age, is a question that doth not at all affect the present subject: for, God's shortening the hands of his servants doth not imply that he shortened his own.

CHAP. I.

WHEN God, in his mercy, had decreed to restore mankind to the state of immortality forfeited by Adam, he saw fit, in order to preserve the memory of himself amidst a world running headlong into idolatry, to select a single family, which, advanced into a nation, might, in the interim, become the repository of his holy name. To this purpose he took the seed of Abraham, in reward of the virtues of their forefathers,

fathers, and, in due time, brought them, by leaders chosen from amongst themselves, to the land he had appointed for them.

In compliance with the religious notions of those times, he condescended, when he communicated himself as the Maker and Governor of the Universe, to adopt them for his peculiar people, under the idea of their *tutelar Deity*, or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, the better to secure the great end of their separation, assumed likewise the title and office of their *King*, or Civil Governor.

Hence their Religion came under the idea of a *Law*; and was so considered and denominated. And their Law was, in the strictest sense, *Religion*, as having all the sanctions of a divine command.

In a word, those two great rules of human conduct, which are, elsewhere, kept so distinct by their different originals, and different administrations, were, here, by the sameness in both, specifically lost in a perfect incorporation. And the whole œconomy (as every thing in this dispensation was relative to the Jews as a body) went under the common name of LAW.

From this account of the Jewish constitution, it follows, That Religion, which, elsewhere, hath only *particulars* for its subjects, had, Here, the nation or *community:* And what, elsewhere, as far as concerns the divine origin of religion, is only a *private* matter, was, Here, a *public:* For the Deity being both their tutelary God and civil Governor, the proper object of his care, in each capacity, was the collective body: and, whether we consider the observance due to him under the idea of Law or Religion, it was still the body which was the proper subject of it. Not but that religion had there a *private* part, or particulars for its subject; But then it was that religion we call

natural; founded in what reason discovers of the relation between the Creator and the creature; an aid, which revelation is so far from rejecting, that we find it constitutes the ground of every extraordinary dispensation vouchsafed by God to mankind. For, *he that cometh to God* [*i.e.* by revelation] *must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him**.

From this account of the Hebrew Government, one natural consequence ariseth, That the principal rites of their *religion* and *law* were to be performed and celebrated in some determined place. This, the object and subject of their *ceremonial* seemed equally to require. For, the ideas of tutelary God and King implied a local residence: and a national act, created by the relations arising from these things, required a fixed and certain place for its celebration: and both together seemed to mark out the capital of the country for that purpose.

This consequent practice, which the nature and reason of things so evidently point out, the institutes of the Hebrew constitution expressly order and enjoin. During the early and unsettled times of the Jewish state, the sacrifices, prescribed by their ritual, were directed to be offered up before the door of an ambulatory tabernacle: but when they had gained the establishment decreed for them, and a magnificent temple was erected for religious worship, then all their sacrifices were to be offered at Jerusalem only.

Now, sacrifices constituting the substance of their national worship, their religion could not be said to subsist longer than the continuance of that celebration. But sacrifices could be performed only in one appointed temple: so that when this was finally destroyed, ac-

* Heb. xi. 6.

cording

cording to the predictions of the prophets, the institution itself became abolished.

Nor was any thing more consonant to the *nature* of this religion, than the assigning such a celebration of its rites. The temple would exist while they remained a people, and continued sovereign: and when they ceased to be such, they would indeed lose their temple, but then they had no further use for it; because the rites there celebrated were relative to them, only as a civil policied nation.

These consequences are all so necessarily connected, and were so clearly understood, that when Jesus informs the woman of Samaria of the approaching abolition of the law of Moses, he expresses himself by this circumstance, that men should *no longer worship at the Temple of Jerusalem* *.

As on the other hand, when the false witnesses against Stephen deposed that they heard him say, that *Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place*, the Temple, they drew their own inference from it, that he *would change the law and customs which Moses had delivered them* †.

If, from the *nature* of this religion, we go on to consider its *end*, we shall find, in it, all the marks of a religion, preparatory and introductory to another more complete and perfect; of which it contains the rudiments, and presents the shadow. Such as the confining its fundamental doctrine, the worship of the true God, within the limits of one small country. Such again, as its multifarious and enigmatic ritual; of

* John iv. 21.

† Acts vi. 13, 14. And in this the falshood of their testimony seemed to consist. For Stephen could never have spoken so crudely of the destruction of the *Law*, when his Master had said, he was *not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.* Matt. v. 17.

which no reasonable account can be had, but that part was instituted to oppose the reigning superstitions, in order to preserve the separation; and part to prefigure, by types or symbols, the essential circumstances of some future dispensation. And part again, by the admirable contrivance of divine Wisdom, both opposed the reigning superstitions, and prefigured the future dispensation.

But Christianity, which established its pretensions by the power of miracles and the purity of doctrine, doth in fact support these conclusions, by representing Judaism as only the rudiments and shadow of its own more complete œconomy.

This being premised, we say, that the more perfect dispensation could not take place till the less perfect, which prefigured it, and prepared its way, was set aside and abolished.

But now, if the mere voluntary adherence to a religion, or men's calling themselves of it, were enough to prevent its abolition, the perverseness and obstinacy of our nature are such, that they might, and, in fact, would lie in the way, and obstruct the purposes of Providence.

Therefore has the great Disposer of all things so divinely constituted this preparatory religion, as to put it out of the power of human perversity even to delay or retard its destined abolition; by so constituting the natures, and disposing the order of his dispensations, that those essential rites, which made the Jewish religion to be what it was, should of necessity require a fixed local celebration, which it was not possible to perform longer than while the Jewish people continued a nation, and in possession of the sovereignty of Palestine. St. Chrysostom has an elegant observation to this purpose: "From the necessity (says he) of a

" local worship, God covertly withdrew the Jews " from the rage of ritual observances. For as a Phy- " sician, by breaking the cup, prevents his patient " from indulging his appetite in a hurtful draught; so " God withheld them from their sacrifices, by de- " stroying the city itself, and making the place inac- " cessible to all of them *."

It may not be improper, in this place, to take notice of an objection, though indeed it be already obviated. It is, " that the sacrificing at Jerusalem being a mere ceremony, we can hardly conceive how the want of it should annihilate the whole system of a religious institution. The objection goes upon ideas foreign to the subject. The *essence* of the Jewish religion was *ceremonial.* Hence it is that there is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies what we mean by *ceremonies:* nor, if what we have delivered, concerning the nature and genius of the Jewish religion, be true, could there be any such. The same is observable in the Greek language. And the reason is the same. It hath been shewn elsewhere †, that this nature was common both to the Jewish and Greek religions; rational indeed, in the former; but altogether absurd in the other. Yet it will be said, the Romans had a word to express *ceremonies.* It is true, they had. And the reason of their having it will shew why the Jews and Greeks had it not. Their lawgiver, Numa, instituted a kind of system of *natural* religion for their *national* use; which, time and craft soon corrupted with gross idolatries. So that as superstitions accu-

* Διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἀνάγκης λανθανόντως αὐτὸς ἀπήγαγε, τῆς περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα μανίας—ὥσπερ ἔν ὁ Ἰατρὸς ἴστησι τῆς ἀκαίρου ψυχροποσίας τὸν ἄῤῥωστον, τὸ σκεῦος ἀφανίσας, οὕτω κ᾽ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν θυσιῶν ἀπήγαγε, τὴν πόλιν αὐτὴν καθελών, κ᾽ ποιήσας αὐτὴν ἄβατον πᾶσιν. Homil. VI. advers. Jud.

† Divine Legation.

mulated, they would be under a necessity of inventing a word to signify that specific mode of worship, through which such superstitions were conveyed.

Thus Judaism being of necessity to cease on the establishment of Christianity, we see for what reason it was predicted, that when *Shiloh came, the sceptre should depart from Judah.* Admirable are the ways of Providence! and so will they be always found, whenever we happen upon the clue, that leads us to the right opening.

If then, from the nature of things, it doth appear, that the TEMPLE WORSHIP must fall with the rise of that which is *in spirit and in truth*; and that the abolition of the Mosaic law is essential to the establishment of the Gospel; we cannot but conclude, that a matter of this importance (so illustrious a proof of the relation and dependance between these two religions!) must be predicted, both by the prophets of the *old*, and the Founder of the *new* dispensation.

They both, indeed, have done it. And fully to comprehend the force and just value of their expressions was the end for which we have here deduced things from their original, and given this general view of the course and order of God's moral œconomy; on which, the sense of the prophecies relating to it must needs be determined: and without which, the several predictions of the destruction of the temple, expressed in general terms, would be subject to cavil, as in themselves implying only a *total*, and not a *final* subversion. Whereas now, from the nature of the dispensations, we understand that a destruction, thus foretold, necessarily implied a *final* one.

The prophet Isaiah, predicting, as usual, the triumphs of the Gospel under the terms of a temporal deliverance of the Jews from their hostile neighbours, delivers

delivers himself in the following words: "And in this "mountain [*viz.* of Zion] shall the Lord of Hosts "make *unto all people* a feast of fat things, a feast "of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of "wines on the lees well refined. And he will des- "troy in this mountain *the face of the covering cast* "*over all people, and the veil that is spread over all* "*nations.* He will *swallow up death in victory* *." And to shew, that some great event in a remote and future age was the principal object of his prophecy, he introduces it with this song of triumph: "O Lord, "thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will praise "thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; "*thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth* †:" *i. e.* What thou hast originally decreed, thou wilt, in the latter ages, bring to pass. Therefore having, in the *sixth* verse, enigmatically described that salvation which should arise from mount Zion; in the *seventh*, he more openly intimates the abolition of the Temple-worship, by the figure of destroying that *veil*, which, at the crucifixion of the Lord of life, the evangelist informs us, *was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*; called by the prophet; from the confined nature of the Jewish religion, the veil that hid truth from the nations. In this sense St. Paul appears to have understood the prophecy; for he applies the concluding words to the last triumph of Christ over *death* ‡.

Conformably to these ideas, Jesus says to the woman of *Samaria*, "Believe me, the hour cometh, "when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at "Jerusalem, worship the Father.....But the hour "cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall "worship the Father in spirit and in truth §." And

* Chap. xxv. ver. 6, 7, 8.
† Isai. xxv. 1.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 54.
§ John iv. 21, 22, 23.

to

to secure the honour of this great event, Providence had decreed that the city and temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed; of which the angel informs Daniel in the following words: "And after threescore "and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not "for himself: and the people of the prince that "shall come shall destroy the *city* and the *sanctuary*; "and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto "the end of the war *desolations* are determined. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for "one week: and in the midst of the week he shall "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for "the overspreading of *abominations* he shall make it "*desolate* even until the consummation, and that "determined, shall be poured upon the desolate*." In which we see a plain and circumstantial description of the overthrow of the city and temple by the Romans under Titus. Jesus foretels the then approaching event in the following manner: "And when "Jesus was come near, he beheld the *city*, and "wept over it, saying—The days shall come upon "thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about "thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on "every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, "and thy children within thee; and they shall not "leave in thee one stone upon another†." Two other evangelists ‡ inform us, that "Jesus went "out, and departed from the *temple*; and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings "of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye "not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, there "shall not be left here one stone upon another, "that shall not be thrown down." And when the

* Dan. ix. 26, 27. † Luke xix. 41. 43, 44.
‡ Matt. xxiv. 1, 2. 15. Mark xiii. 1, 2. 14.

disciples

disciples *privately* asked him *when these things should be*, he answered, *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place*; referring to the prophecy quoted above. Hitherto we see a total destruction indefinitely predicted. The following passage of St. Luke's Gospel marks the fixed duration of it. "And Jerusalem (says Jesus) shall be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of "the Gentiles be fulfilled*." But, of the period here meant, commentators differ: Some, as Hammond, suppose it reaches no lower than till the empire became Christian: others, as Dr. S. Clarke, that it extends to the future conversion of the Jews.

Amidst this uncertainty, arising from the general expressions of these prophecies considered alone, the only way of coming to the truth, *i.e.* to know whether they mean a *final* destruction, or, if not, what sort of restoration; and when it is to succeed; the only way, I say, is to recur to what hath been discoursed above, concerning the *nature* of the TWO DISPENSATIONS: In which we have shewn, that *Christianity* and the *Temple-worship* cannot subsist together: and so must conclude, that these prophecies foretel not only the *total*, but the *final* destruction of the Jewish temple.

And now, What are we to conclude from all this, to the case in hand?—It is evident, a *repugnancy* in the co-existence of Judaism and Christianity, would require God's interposition to prevent the restoration of the temple: it is as evident, that a *prophecy* of its *final* destruction would do the same. *Either* of these facts therefore being sufficient to establish our point, so much discourse had not been employed on

* Luke xxi. 24.

both,

both, had they stood independent of one another. But the *prophecies* being *so* delivered, as to be of themselves ambiguous, there was a necessity of calling in the *nature* of God's dispensations, to explain their precise meaning; which prophecies would, then, reciprocally support what we infer from the different *genius* of the two religions.

If it be asked (as there is now no secret in the counsels of God but what audacious man will ask the reason of) "Why the *final* destruction of the temple was so doubtfully delivered, that there was need of our having recourse to the nature and genius of the two dispensations, to comprehend the full meaning of the prophecy?" I answer, in general, that it seems very irreverent, when God hath clearly made known his will to us, to cavil with his wisdom, for not doing it in that way which to us may seem the most direct and simple. But, in this case it happens, that we see great *ends* obtained, by the very *way* he hath been pleased to use. For by obliging us to have recourse to the nature of his *dispensations*, in order to ascertain the full meaning of his *prophecies*, he hath put us under the necessity of having always in view a circumstance of great moment, which we might otherwise be apt to forget; a circumstance which impresseth on us the strongest ideas of the divine wisdom. Had the abolition of Judaism, on the establishment of Christianity been only *expedient*, and not *necessary*, as even in that case we may be assured it had been in God's counsel never to suffer the temple to be rebuilt, so we may well believe that the revelation of this counsel by prophecy had been in the express terms of a *final* destruction; because, from the *expediency* only of an abolition, general terms could never lead us to conclude the predicted

predicted destruction to be *final*. But now as the abolition was *necessary*, that alone would suffice to fix the precise meaning of general terms. And as the use of general terms would oblige us to have recourse to those circumstances on which the necessity was founded, and the constant view of those circumstances is highly useful for religious purposes, therefore were general terms very wisely employed.

It may perhaps be further objected, "That the reasons here given for the necessity of abolishing Judaism, on the coming of Christianity, reach no farther than to a *virtual* abolition: whereas it is an *actual* abolition only that can serve our purpose."

To this I reply, That the abolition of a preparatory religion, on the appearance of that which was to follow, is not a matter of every day's experience. There is but this one instance in the world, and never will be another. Let us divest ourselves, therefore, of all those common notions we form from analogies, and we shall see that reason leads us to expect an *actual* abolition. Indeed, according to our ideas of the general nature of religion, an *actual* abolition could not be certainly had, without a force upon free-will; hence, in such cases, a *virtual* abolition is all we are to expect; and, from a consideration of the general nature of religion, we are misled into this objection. But the religion in question was of a peculiar kind. The *essential part* of it was a *local worship*. This might be *actually* abolished without any force upon the will. When therefore an abolition was *foretold*, and the *necessity* of it seen, must we not conclude such a one to be meant? On the whole, a *virtual* abolition of *circumcision, purification, distinction of meats*, &c. which regarded particulars directly, and the body, only obliquely, was all that could be

be expected: but the nature of things seems to require an *actual* abolition of what concerned only the body as such; which was the *temple-worship*. To these many other reasons might be added, such as the apparent necessity of shewing, that this nation was no longer God's *peculiar*; which could hardly be done while they were in possession of a worship, that was the characteristic mark of God's *peculiarity:* and such as the transferring the kingship of the Jews from God to *Christ*; which would not appear to be done while the temple-worship, the specific act of allegiance, was in being. There are various considerations besides of equal weight. But we may seem perhaps to have already exceeded the proportion that the parts of this discourse should bear to one another.... And yet I am tempted to make one observation more, which, I hope the importance of the subject will excuse.

The prophecy of Jesus, concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is conceived in such high and swelling terms, that not only the modern interpreters, but the ancient likewise, have supposed that our Lord interweaves into it a DIRECT prediction of his second coming to judgement*. Hence arose a current opinion of *those* times, that the consummation of all things was at hand; which hath afforded a handle to an infidel objection in *these*, insinuating that Jesus, in order to keep his followers attached to his service, and patient under sufferings, flattered them with the near approach of those rewards which compleated all their views and expectations. To which, the defenders of religion have opposed this answer, That the distinction of short and long, in the duration of time, is lost in eternity; and, with the Almighty, *a thousand years are but as yesterday*, &c.

* See Divine Legation.

But

But the principle both go upon is false; and if what hath been said be duly weighed, it will appear, that the parts of this prophecy which mark a speedy advent, do not respect God's *second* coming to judgement, but his *first*; in the abolition of the Jewish policy, and the ESTABLISHMENT of the Christian; that *kingdom of Christ*, which commenced on the total ceasing of the *theocracy*. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the *temple-service*, so the reign of *Christ*, *in spirit and in truth*, had then its first beginning.

This was the true ESTABLISHMENT of Christianity, not that effected by the *donations* or *conversions* of *Constantine*. Till the Jewish Law was abolished, over which the *Father* presided as King, the reign oft he *Son* could not take place; because the sovereignty of *Christ* over mankind, was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews, *transferred*, and more largely extended.

This therefore being one of the most important æras in the œconomy of grace; and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations; we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so *great an event*, together with the *destruction of Jerusalem*, by which it was effected: for in the old prophetic language* the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether *spiritual* or *civil*, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth; the darkening the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; as the rise and establishment of *new ones* are by processions in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpets, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations †.

Thus much, therefore, being premised, we enter

* See The Divine Legation, Books III. & IV.

† Matt. chap. xxiv.

directly

directly on our subject; it being now seen, that the truth of Christianity must stand or fall with the ruin or the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem; for if that temple should be rebuilt for the purpose of Jewish worship, Christianity could not support its pretensions; nor the Prophets, nor Jesus, the truth of their predictions.

CHAP. II.

THERE was a time when the *powers of this world* were all opposed to the progress of the *gospel*; and as they continued thus opposed for some ages, it would have been a miracle, as rare as most of those by which it was supported, if, amongst the various attempts to suppress and discredit it, there had not been a project formed to give the lie to those prophecies which denounced lasting ruin and desolation to the *Jewish Temple*.

The first attempt upon Christianity was such as was most natural to this *power*, the suppressing it by brutal force: and the subjection of the whole civilized world to the despotic will of one blind persecutor, gave that force its utmost moment. The violence of its effort was TEN times repeated; and as often, by the blood of the martyrs, victoriously repelled.

Though this may be justly reckoned amongst the marks of its divinity, yet it must be owned, that brutal force was not the most artful or dangerous way of procuring the ruin even of what they thought it, a mere human contrivance. The utmost which force can do (and that it often fails in) is to stop the progress of a profession: while the same advantages of power, employed towards a rational conviction of its falsehood, proceed

proceed more fatally to its subversion. But this method of attack required a comprehensive knowledge of human nature, and of the doctrines to be suppressed.

Few of the persecuting emperors had either. M. Antoninus had the one; Julian only, who closed the scene, had both. Till his time, the sole engine was simple force. Antonine himself used no other. And yet his knowledge of men might have shewn him the folly of so unmanly a proceeding. But then he knew no more of Christianity than the most ignorant of his courtiers. Philosophy, which should have led him to inquire into a religion that all were running eagerly to embrace, was the very thing that restrained his curiosity. For Stoical pride (of which sect he was) would confess no need of the knowledge of falsehood to perfect its followers in truth: It despised the oblique genius of the Academy, which made all truth to depend on the knowledge and detection of falsehood.'

Julian was the first who got enough acquainted with the Gospel to apply such arms against it as must have ended in its ruin, had it been nothing more than what he affected to think it, a human invention. And here we shall be forced to confess, that Providence seems to have raised up this extraordinary man on set purpose to do the last honours to the Religion of Jesus; to shew the world what *human power*, with all its advantages united, was able to oppose to its establishment. For we find in this emperor all the great qualities that a projector could conceive, or an adversary would require, to secure success to so daring an opposition. He was eloquent and liberal; artful, insinuating, and indefatigable; which, joined to a severe temperance, an affected love of justice, and a courage superior to all trials, first gained him the affections, and, soon after, the peaceable possession of the whole empire.

He was bred up in the Christian religion from his infancy: and was obliged to profess it (or at least to disguise his passion* for Paganism) to the time he assumed the purple. His aversion to his uncle Constantine, and his cousin Constantius, for the cruelties exercised on his family, had prejudiced him against the Christian religion: and his attachment to some Platonic sophists, who had been employed in his education, gave him as violent a bias towards Paganism. He was ambitious; and Paganism, in some of its Theurgic rites, had flattered and encouraged his views of the diadem: He was vain, which made him aspire to the glory of re-establishing the ancient rites: he was extremely knowing, and fond of Grecian literature; the very soul of which, in his opinion †, was the old Theology: But above all, notwithstanding a considerable mixture of enthusiasm ‡, his superstition was excessive, and what nothing but the blood of *hecatombs* could appease.

With these dispositions he came to the empire; and, consequently, with a determined purpose of subverting the Christian, and restoring the Pagan worship. His predecessors had left him the repeated experience of the inefficacy of downright force. The *virtue* of the first Christians then rendered this effort fruitless; the *numbers* of the *present* would have now made it dangerous. He found it necessary therefore to change his ground: his knowledge of human nature furnished him with arms, and his knowledge of the faith he had

* A rudimentis pueritiæ primis inclinatior erat erga numinum cultum, paullatimque adulescens desiderio rei flagrabat. Am. Marc. l. xxii. c. 5.

† Vid. Ep. Jul. xlii.

‡ Οὗτος [Ἰουλιανὸς] ὁ ἐν τελεταῖς μυρίαις ὁμιλήσας Δαίμοσιν.—Libanii Or. de ulc. Juliani nece.

abandoned,

abandoned, enabled him to direct those arms to most advantage.

He began with re-establishing Paganism by law *, and granting a full liberty of conscience to the Christians. On this principle, he restored those to their civil rights, of what party soever, who had been banished on account of religion; and even affected to reconcile, to a mutual forbearance, the various sects of Christianity. Yet notwithstanding, his own historian assures us, he put on this mask of moderation and equity, for no other purpose than to inflame the dissensions in the church †. And his subsequent conduct fully justifies the historian's observation.

He then fined and banished ‡ such of the more popular clergy as had abused their power, either in exciting the people to burn and destroy pagan temples, or to commit violence on an opposite sect. And it cannot be denied but that their turbulent and insolent manners deserved all the severity of his justice.

He proceeded to revoke and take away those immunities, honours, and revenues §, which his uncle and cousin had granted to the clergy. Neither was his pretence for this altogether unreasonable. He judged the grants to be exorbitant; and besides, as they were attendant on a *national religion*, when the *establishment* came to be transferred from Christianity to Paganism,

* Planis absolutisque decretis aperiri templa, arisque hostias admoveri ad deorum statuit cultum. Am. Mar. l. xxii. c. 5.

† Utque dispositorum roboraret effectum, dissidentes Christianorum antistites cum plebe discissa in palatium intromissos monebat, ut, civilibus discordiis consopitis, quisque, nullo vetante, religioni suæ serviret intrepidus. Quod agebat ideo obstinate, ut dissensiones, augente licentia, non timeret unanimantem postea plebem. Idem ib.

‡ Nazian. Orat. i. cont. Jul.

§ Κληρικὰς μείλας, πᾶσαν ἀτέλειαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ τὰ σιτηρέσια ἀφεῖλετο Κωνσταντίου [Κωνσταντίνα Vul.] Soz. l. v. c. 5.

he concluded they must follow the religion of the state. But there was one immunity he took away, which no good policy, even under an establishment, should have granted them; which was an exemption * from the civil *tribunals*.

The Apostate went still further; he disqualified the Christian laity for bearing office in the state: and even this, the security of the established religion may often require.

But his most illiberal treatment of the Christians, was his forbidding the professors, who were of that religion, to teach *humanity* and the sciences, in the public schools. His more immediate design, in this, was to hinder the youth from taking impressions to the disadvantage of Paganism: His remoter view, to deprive Christianity of the support of human literature †. Not

* Τοῖς βασιλικοῖς ἀπιδύναι. Soz. l. v. c. 5.

† This edict is to be found amongst the works of Julian; and goes under the name of his xliid epistle. It forbids the Christian Professors to *teach* human literature. But because the ancients, such as Gregory Naz. Socrates, Sozomene, Theodoret, and Rufinus, expressly say, that he forbad Christians to *learn* it; some modern critics have embarrassed themselves in according this imaginary difference. Baronius and Valesius, who could not find it was forbidden, by this edict, to *learn*, concluded there was no such prohibition. Tillemont and Fleuri will not allow the fathers to be mistaken; and therefore imagine there was another edict, which extended the prohibition to the case in question. Tillemont supposes this the more readily, because he thinks the xliid letter is indefinite and obscure. It appears to me very clear and precise; and it seems strange none of these critics saw, that, as this prohibition is circumscribed in the edict, the not being allowed to *learn* was the necessary consequence of being forbid to *teach*. For the Professors are not only disallowed to explain Pagan authors to Pagan auditories, but to Christian likewise; as appears from the following words, *But if they* [The Christian professors] *think these authors give a false and unworthy account of the tremendous majesty of the immortals, let them go and explain Matthew and Luke* in

Not content with this, he endeavoured even to destroy what was already written in defence of Christianity. With this view he wrote to Ecdicius the governor of Egypt, and to Porphyry the treasurer-general, to collect up, and send to him the library * of George bishop of Alexandria, who for his cruelty and tyranny had been torn in pieces by the people. Nay,

in the churches of the Galileans. εἰ δὲ εἰς τὰς τιμιωτάτας ὑπολαμβάνουσι παιδεύεσθαι, βαδιζόντων εἰς τὰς τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἐκκλησίας, ἐξηγησόμενοι Ματθαῖον καὶ Λουκᾶν. But why was this said, if they were at liberty to teach the Christian youth the sciences? If they were not, Where could they go for instruction but to the schools of the Pagan Professors? Hither, indeed, they are invited by the edict itself. *Those of the* [Christian] *youth* (says Julian) *who are desirous of frequenting* [the schools of the Pagan professors] *are by no means to be excluded.* Ὁ βουλόμενος τῶν νέων φοιτᾶν, οὐκ ἀποκλείεται. This was kind: but would by no means be accepted. Here the bait was half off the hook; and discovered, that to draw them thither was one end of the edict: which he imagined would necessarily reduce things to this state, either to dispose the Galileans, during their youth, in favour of Paganism; or to disable them, in their adult age, to defend Christianity. So that it appears, from hence, his forbidding Christian professors to *explain* Pagan writers to any audience whatsoever, fully amounted to a prohibition of *learning* them. The Fathers, we see, did not scruple directly to affirm it. And that they believed it, appears from their finding no other way of avoiding the dilemma of *corruption*, or *ignorance*, than by composing Epic poems, tragedies, and other classic compositions upon a Christian plan, and on subjects taken from sacred story. This circumstance (had Baronius and Valesius attended to it) was alone sufficient to shew them, that the Fathers have told us no more than what they saw and felt, when they said, that Julian forbad them to *learn* human literature, as well as to *teach* it. Let me add, that nothing but this interpretation of his edict can account for the severe censure which his own historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, passes upon it, in the following words; "illud autem erat "inclemens, *obruendum perenni silentio*, quod arcebat docere ma- "gistros rhetoricos et grammaticos, ritus Christiani cultores." Lib. xxii. c. 10.

* Ep. ix. and xxxvi.—πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν φιλόσοφα παρ' αὐτῷ, πολλὰ δὲ ῥητορικά, πολλὰ δὲ ἦν καὶ τῆς τῶν δυστυχῶν Γαλιλαίων θεοσκαλίας, ἃ βουλόμην μὲν ἠφανίσθαι πάλαι. Ep. ix.

Nay, to such a length did his aversion to the name of CHRIST carry him, as to decree, by a public edict, that his followers should be no longer called Christians, but *Galileans**. Not but there might be a mixture of policy in it too, as knowing the efficacy of a *nick-name* to render a profession ridiculous. However, it is more than probable, superstition had its share in this unprincely edict. The fanatic Platonists, to whom *Julian* had entirely given himself up, were much besotted with the mysterious *power of names*. These having been struck with the wonders performed by the name of *Christ*, and finding so many difficulties oppose themselves to their master's exterminating scheme, might well fancy there was a certain *charm* in the word *Christian*, which rendered the religion, so denominated, invincible. And this seems to be the ground *Gregory Naz.* went upon (if he had any) for saying, that the reason of this extraordinary law might be, that *Julian* trembled at the name of *Christ*, just as the *Demons* did, who suffered torments as often as they heard it pronounced †.

A man so transported by a train of the most ungoverned passions, we may well suppose, would stop at no means, how low and vile soever, to carry on his project. His letters afford us an instance of one so dishonourable, that no testimony but his own could make it credible. Titus, bishop of Bostra, and his clergy, in an address presented to Julian, acquaint him

* Γαλιλαίους ἀντὶ Χριστιανῶν ὀνομάσας τε καὶ καλεῖσθαι νομοθετήσας. Greg. Naz. Orat. i. cont. Jul.

† ἡ φοβούμενός γε τὴν δύναμιν τῆς προσηγορίας, ὥσπερ οἱ δαίμονες. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μεταβαίνων ἐφ' ἕτερο, ὄνομα τῶν οὐκ εἰωθότων, οὐδὲ γνωρίμων. Orat. iii.

Καὶ οἱ μὲν δαίμονες φρίττουσιν εἰς ἔτι καὶ νῦν Χριστοῦ καλουμένου, καὶ οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τῆς κακίας ἡμῶν ἐξίτηλος γέγονεν ἡ τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου δύναμις. Orat. i.

with

with their care in keeping the flock committed to them (then equal in number to the Pagans) in due obedience to the laws. The return Julian makes for this act of duty, is to acquaint the people of Bostra, that their bishop was become their delator; that he had represented them as prone to sedition, and even capable of the last excesses, but that he and his clergy kept them in order. For this crime therefore, which he calls the taking to himself the merit of the people's good behaviour, he advises them to expel the bishop from their city *.

After this, no instance of baseness or injustice will be thought strange. On pretence that the Arian church of Edessa was too rich, and had not used the Valentinians with temper, he seized on every thing belonging to it, and divided the plunder amongst his soldiers. And, to add the bitterness of contumely to his injustice, he told them he did it to ease them of their burthens, that they might proceed more lightly, and with less impediment in their journey to Heaven †.

But Socrates, the historian, tells us, that he imposed a tax or tribute, proportioned to every man's circumstances, on all who would not sacrifice ‡. This was persecution in form: and yet he did not stop here, but proceeded to still greater extremities.

Though he did not persecute to death by laws, that being directly contrary to his edicts of toleration, which

* Ep. lii. Βοστρηνοῖς. It is remarkable, that the author of the Characteristics, in his third volume of Misc. Ref. hath given us a translation of this letter, for *a pattern*, as he tells us, *of the humour and genius, of the principle and sentiments, of this virtuous, gallant, generous, and mild Emperor*, p. 87, & seq. 4th ed. It is true, his translation drops the affair of Titus, their bishop. So that nothing hinders his reader from concluding but that the Emperor might indeed be as *gallant* and *generous* as he is pleased to represent him.

† Ep. xliii. Ἐκκλησ. ‡ Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 13.

he had with so much ostentation and frequency repeated; yet he connived at the *fury* of the people, and the *brutality* of the governors of provinces; who, during his short reign, brought many martyrs to the stake. For he put such into governments, whose inhumanity and blind zeal for their country-superstitions were most distinguished. And when the suffering churches presented their complaints to him, he dismissed them with cruel scoffs; telling them *, their religion directed them to suffer without murmuring. So that we have little reason to doubt what the ancients † say of his declared intention (had he returned victorious from the Persian war) to subject the whole Christian world to the honester persecution of fire and sword ‡.

These were the efforts of the Emperor Julian to overturn Christianity. However he took care to avoid the absurdity of our modern apostates, who are for abolishing the faith in which, like him, they have been bred, without substituting any other religion in its stead. Julian's attempts to destroy Christianity did

* Greg. Naz. i. Orat. cont. Jul. Socrat. Eccl. Hist. l. iii. c. 14.

† Greg. Naz. ii. Orat. contr. Jul. Ruff. Eccl. Hist. l. i. c. 36. How well all this agrees with what the author of the Characteristics says of Julian, in the following words, I leave the admirers of that noble writer to determine: [Julian] *was a great restrainer of persecution, and would allow of nothing further than a resumption of church lands and publick schools; without any attempt on the goods or persons, even of those who branded the state religion, and made a merit of affronting the public worship.* Vol. I. p. 25. 4th edit.

‡ What his creature and confident Libanius tells us, as part of his panegyric, makes this account of the Christian writers very credible. He says that Julian took up arms against Constantius, to restore the Pagan religion: Οὗτος ὁ ὑπὲρ τῶν ὑβρισμένων ἱερῶν στάξας μὲν ἴως τῶν ἐξῶν μόνον, ὅπλων δὲ ἀψάμενος, ἐπειδὴ καιρὸς παρῆν. De Ulciis. Juliani nec.

not

not precede, but went hand in hand with his projects to support and reform Paganism.

He wrote and he *preached* in person, in defence of Gentile superstition: and has himself acquainted us with the ill success of his ministry *. Of his controversial writings, his answerer Cyril hath given us a large specimen; by which we see he was equally intent to recommend Paganism and to discredit Revelation.

His reformation of Gentile superstition turned upon these points: 1. To hide the absurdity of its traditions by moral and philosophic allegories †. These he found provided to his hands, principally, by philosophers of his own sect, the Platonists. Who, not without the assistance of the other sects of Theists, had, ever since the appearance of Christianity, been refining the theology of Paganism, to oppose it to that of Revelation; under pretence, that their new-invented allegories were the ancient *spirit* of the *letter*, which the first poetical divines had conveyed down, in this invelope, to posterity. A noble design! of which some *letters*, lately published, *concerning mythology*, will give the reader a very tolerable idea.

2. He then attempted to correct the morals of the Pagan priesthood, and regulate their manners on the practice of the first Christians. In his epistle to Arsacius, he not only requires of them a personal behaviour void of offence; but that they reform their houshold on the same principle: He directs that they who attend

* — εἰς τὴν Βέῤῥοιαν ἐπορευόμην — Διελέχθην δὲ ὀλίγα τῇ βουλῇ περὶ θεοσεβείας, ἀλλὰ τοὺς λόγους ἐπήνουν μὲν ἅπαντες. ἐπείσθησαν δὲ αὐτοῖς ὀλίγοι πάνυ, καὶ οὗτοι οἱ καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων ἐδόκουν ἔχειν ὑγιῶς ἐλάβοντο δὲ ὥσπερ παῤῥησίας ἀποτρίψασθαι τὴν αἰδῶ καὶ ἀποθέσθαι. Ep. xxvii. Λιβανίῳ σοφιστῇ.

† See his discourse composed in honour of the *Mother of the Gods*.

at

at the altar should abstain from the theatre, the tavern, and the exercise of all ignoble professions: that in their private character they be meek and humble; but that, in the acts and offices of religion, they assume a character conformable to the majesty of the immortal Gods, whose ministers they are. But above all he recommends to them the virtues of charity and benevolence *.

With regard to discipline and religious policy, Nazianzene and Sozomene tell us, he had planned an establishment for readers in divinity; for the order and parts of the divine offices; for a regular and formal service, with days and hours of worship; that he had decreed to found hospitals for the poor, monasteries for the devout, and to prescribe and enjoin initiatory and expiatory rites, with a course of instruction for converts, and of penance for offenders; and in all things to imitate the church discipline of that time †.

CHAP. III.

BUT the indifference and corruptions of Paganism, joined to the inflexibility and perseverance of the Christians, kept his project from advancing with that speed which his malice as well as zeal demanded. So that, impatient of delay, he struck out a new and daring project to alter the whole face of things at once. With this view he planned the famous scheme of rebuilding the TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM. Its final destruction had been foretold both by Jesus and the Prophets; and it was, as he imagined, reserved for

* Ep. xlix. Ἀρσακίῳ ἀρχιερεῖ Γαλατίας. Fragmentum Orationis Epistolæ.

† Greg. Naz. i. Orat. cont. Jul. Sozom. l. v. c. 16.

this

this favourite of the Gods *, to give the lye to their predictions.

He had before (in pursuance of his general scheme of opposing Revelation to itself, by setting one sect against another) written to the body or community of the Jews †, in which he assured them of his protection; his concern for their former ill usage; and his fixed purpose to screen them from future oppression, that they might be at liberty, and in a disposition to redouble their vows for the prosperity of his reign. And concluded with a promise, that, if he came back victorious from the Persian war, he would rebuild Jerusalem, restore them to their possessions, live with them in the holy city, and join with them in the worship of the great God of the universe ‡.

* His confident, Libanius, compliments him on his close communion with the Gods, and on the familiar intercourse with which they honoured him. This he speaks of as a peculiar favour, as indeed it was, both to *hear* and *see* them. -Καὶ μέσος σὺ τὰς ἐκείνων ὥρακας μορφὰς εὐδαίμων εὐδαιμόνων θεωρεῖς, καὶ μόνῳ σοὶ φωνῆς θεῶν ὑπῆρξεν ἀκοῦσαι. Legat. ad Julian. This was doubtless at an *initiation*; for Libanius informs us, in another place quoted above, that Julian had been joined in communion with Demons in all the *mysteries*. Of one of these initiations, Gregory, in his first oration against Julian, tells a remarkable story; that as he descended into the initiating cave, he was terrified with the visions that passed before him [see the account of the *mysteries* in the Div. Leg.], which, on his making the sign of the cross, fled and disappeared. I think this not incredible; for the sign of the cross was then the common security against all sudden and unusual terrors; and whatever the Demons did, the priests certainly did not like it. How they turned this farce to their advantage, in the present case, may be seen in Gregory.

† Ἰουδαίων τῷ κοινῷ.

‡ Καλοῦσθαι τὴν βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τὰ κάλλιστα, καθάπερ προαιρούμεθα. ὅπερ χρὴ ποιεῖν ὑμᾶς. ἵνα κἀγὼ τὸν τῶν Περσῶν πόλεμον διαφυγὼν σωθῶ, τὴν ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ἐπιθυμουμένην παρ' ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν οἰκουμένην πόλιν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ἐμοῖς καμάτοις ἀνοικοδομήσας οἰκήσω, καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν δόξαν δώσω μεθ' ὑμῶν τῷ κρείττονι. Ep. xxv.

So that, after this, a proposal of beginning with the Temple, we may well think, would be eagerly embraced by them. Till this was rebuilt, their religion, as we have seen, was in a state of inanition; sacrifices, which were essential to it, being forbidden to be offered in any other place. Hence the Jews had attempted, more than once, to restore it, in defiance of the power to which they were subject; first, in the reign of Adrian, and afterwards, under that of Constantine *: but reasons of state defeated the former attempt; and reasons of religion, the latter. Adrian regarded and punished it as a rebellion; Constantine, as an impiety. They were now invited, as *good subjects* and faithful *worshippers of the true God*, to second the Emperor's design in restoring them to their city and religion.

But here if any one should ask, how it appears that Julian had the purpose we accuse him of? we shall refer him to the whole plan of Julian's conduct for an answer. For men's purposes are best declared by their actions. He had formed a design to ruin Christianity. He had played off the round of his machines to no purpose; and was got, by due degrees, to this; the only battery that was left untried. He had strove in vain to weaken its *influence*; he would now, as his last effort, attack its *pretensions*: and his knowledge of the *two* religions enabled him to chuse his ground to advantage. This is the utmost evidence the case will afford. For sure no man can be so absurd to imagine, that Julian (supposing this to be his intention) would proclaim his purpose by edict, or, what was the same thing, would tell it at court, till he had seen the issue of the event: though had that proved fortunate, we cannot doubt but the Imperial Sophist

* Chrysost. advers. Judæos, passim.

would

would have descanted on his triumph over the Galilæan, in all the forms of the chancery, and in all the modes of the schools. But as his project was so effectually disgraced, it would be still more absurd to expect, that either he, or any of his band of sophists, should be forward to divulge the secret to the world. Indeed, their shyness in mentioning the *disaster at Jerusalem*, when their subject requires it, and the affected disguise they throw over it, when they cannot avoid it, are, to me, the strongest proofs of some conscious guilt, or severe mortification.

But the Christians of that time saw no cause to defer accusing Julian of this *purpose*, till he himself should think fit to confess it; and, therefore, with one voice, they proclaim it, and charge it on him without scruple or hesitation. And the church was too attentive to his motions to be the dupe of his professions, in any thing that concerned religion. The RUINED TEMPLE was the trophy of Christ's victory over his enemies; so that a project to restore it, could not but give them the alarm. They collected, as we do now, (but with far better opportunities of so doing), what was Julian's *real purpose*, from his general character, and his particular behaviour towards them. Nor is it unlikely but they might get further intelligence from something dropt by his confidents, the Sophists, a people vain and talkative, and at no time renowned for secrecy.

Thus much is certain, that the Christian writers are unanimous in what they say of Julian's motive: and seem to be so well assured of its not being brought in question, that they generally content themselves with calling it indefinitely, *a pernicious project, destructive*

of

of Christianity *. But Sozomene goes further, and assures us, that not only Julian, but all the Gentiles, who assisted in it, pushed it forward upon that very motive; and for the sake of *that*, suspended their aversion to the Jewish nation †. For an aversion they always had, and that, no small one, if we may credit the best Pagan writers themselves.

However this is not to be forgotten, that let Julian's motive be what it would, as the successful execution of his design must have impeached the veracity of the prophecies, there was a *necessity* for some interposition to defeat it.

But, besides the principal purpose of utterly discrediting the Christian name, there were other auxiliary motives to push Julian on to a speedy execution. He liked the Jews for their bloody sacrifices, to which he himself was extravagantly given; he liked them better for their implacable hatred to the Christians, in which he far outwent them; and he soothed his family revenge, in favouring those whom Constantine had persecuted, and persecuted for this very attempt. To which we may add that which Marcellinus assigns as his principal motive, the glory of atchieving so bold an enterprize ‡.

* Τελος ἐπαφῆκε καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων φῦλον ἡμῖν—Καὶ ἀποκρυπτόμενος εὐνοίας πλάσματι τὴν ἐπίνοιαν. Greg. Naz.—Καὶ κατ' ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς βλάπτειν σπουδάζων—Socr.—Διετέλει καὶ κατὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας—Καὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους καθώπλισε κατὰ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν περιστευκότων—Theodor.—Ὅτι προσάξας φησὶ Ἰουλιανὸς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀνοικοδομεῖσθαι, ὡς ἂν τὰς περὶ αὐτῶν δεσποτικὰς προῤῥήσεις ἀκύρους ἐλέγξῃ. Philost. apud Photium.

† Πάντα δὲ τὰ ἄλλα δεύτερα ἦν τοῦ πονουμένου βασιλεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἕλλησι, καὶ πᾶσιν Ἰουδαίοις· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι Ἰουδαίοις εὐνοοῦντες, ἐκοινώνουν αὐτοῖς τῆς σπουδῆς, ὑπολαβόντες δύνασθαι κατορθοῦν τὸ ἐγχείρημα, καὶ ψευδεῖς ἀπελέγξαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰς προῤῥήσεις. Sozom.

‡ Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare. Am. Marc. l. iii. c. 1.

But

But Julian, who aimed at higher matters than obtaining the good-will of the Jews, would not intrust so important a design to their inclinations or abilities. He assumed the care of it himself; and carried on the project (as far as it was carried) under the Imperial authority. He assigned for this purpose immense sums out of the public treasury. The superintendancy of it he committed to his bosom friend, Alypius *; to whom he joined, for his assistant, the governor of the province. Alypius was one who had been much obliged by Julian †, and for this reason, as is the nature of princes, was as much beloved by him: but their strongest tye was an equal malice, and congenial aversion to the Christian name; qualities, doubtless, for which Alypius was preferred to that employment. This man, in conjunction with the Jews, and under the sanction of the Imperial authority, entered upon the business. They laid in immense quantities of materials; they assembled vast numbers of workmen; the Jews, of both sexes, and of all degrees, bore a share in the labour: they entered upon the ruins, cleared away the rubbish, and opened the old foundations.

An account of this attempt (to wave the testimony of Christian authors) is transmitted to us by a contemporary writer, of noble extraction, a friend and admirer of Julian, and his companion in arms; a man of affairs, a lover of truth, learned, candid, and impartial; qualities which rendered him the best historian of his time; who, although neither ignorant of the doctrines, nor bigotted against the followers of our faith, yet was strongly attached to the superstition of

* The xxixth and xxxth epistles of Julian are written to him, in the latter of which he calls him, Ἀδελφὲ ποθεινότατε καὶ φιλικώτατε.

† See the xxixth Epistle.

his

his ancestors, and, in one word, a Pagan professed and declared *.

So

* As there have been critics absurd enough to suspect that Ammianus Marcellinus might be a Christian; it may be just worth while to quote a passage of the celebrated Hadrian Valesius, who, in few words, has well exposed this groundless conceit. "Petrus Pithœus ad latus Ammiani sui manu sua notavit, eum "Christianum fuisse, propterea quod in libro xxvii. scripsit, "*Antistites quosdam provinciales*, id est, episcopos Christianorum, "parco victu, vili veste, & demissis oculis, *perpetuo numini ve-* "*risque ejus cultoribus ut parcos commendari & verecundos.* An "ideo Ammianus Christianus habendus est, quòd Deum Christi- "anorum *perpetuum numen*, id est, Deum æternum, & Christianos "*Antistites veros perpetui numinis cultores appellat?* Quasi "non *veros perpetui numinis cultores* Ammianus vocaverat Gen- "tiles ipsos ac sui similes, quibus quidam etiam Christianorum "episcopi in provinciis sanctitate vitæ & verecundia commenda- "rentur ac placerent. Ita tamen de Ammiano sensit & Claudius "Chifletius, cum verbis ejus supra laudatis, tum aliis levissimis "conjecturis adductus. Sed qui attente legerit, quæ præter "cætera in fine libri xiv de Adrasti vel Nemesi, quæ in libro "xvi de Mercurio, quæ in libro xxi de numine Themidis, de Ha- "ruspicina, de Auguriis, variisque artibus futura prænoscendi, "veteres theologos suos, & physicos, ac mysticos secutus scripsit: "profectò fateri cogetur, eum cultui Deum addictum ac devotum "fuisse. Certè de diis gentium tanquam de suis semper loquitur; "de Christianis sacris mysteriisque non item. Nunquam Chris- "tianis se adjungit; nunquam & nusquam eorum se numero ad- "scribit; & Julianum A. quem suum heroa fecit, hanc præcipuè "ob causam mihi videtur toties & tantopere laudare, quod à "religione Christiana ad numinum cultum desciverit. Quâ tamen "erat prudentiâ, adeo modestè atque sincerè, ac nonnumquam "etiam benevolè de Christianis rebus commemorat, ut aliqui "unum ex nostris putaverint. Nimirum, sicuti existimo, vir "bonus, integer & sapiens religionem Christianam non sequi, "tuto se posse intelligebat: eandem principibus suis acceptam & "toto ferè orbe Romano diffusam palam damnare non audebat, "sed & forsitan religionum diversitates non improbavit, per- "suasumque habuit (sicut ait De notitia Dei Symmachus) unâ "viâ non posse pervenire ad tam grande secretum." Præf. in poster. Am. Marc. editionem. To these a thousand other proofs might be added. I shall content myself, at present, with one, taken

So much then the most sceptical reader must be forced to grant. To doubt of this, would be subverting the

taken from those very words which Chifflet has given as the strongest evidence of his Christianity, where, speaking of Constantius, he says, "Christianam religionem absolutam & simplicem anili superstitione confundens; in qua scrutanda perplexius quam componenda gravius, excitavit discidia plurima; quæ progressa fusiùs aluit concertatione verborum." Lib. xxi. cap. 16. By these *words* (as the critics observe) are doubtless meant those two famous party badges, the ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος. Now it seems odd, the historian should characterize a temper of mind, arising from a dispute of this kind (which has rather the appearance of a *philosophic* than a *popular* bigotry) by the name of *anilis superstitio*. On a supposition, that the censurer was a Christian, it appears very odd: but consider him as a Pagan, and nothing is more natural: He must then see this question, concerning the *Son* of God, in the same light he did what their *mythology* taught concerning the paternity and filiation of their gods; which the learned amongst them ranked in the first class of their *aniles superstitiones*. It is true, Ammianus thought more reverently of the *Christian martyrs* than the famous philosophic emperor had formerly done (who called their virtue a *mere brutish obstinacy*, ψιλὴ πράταξις, Lib. xi. § 3.) for he says of them,—"Qui deviare a religione compulsi, pertulere cruciabiles pœnas, adusque gloriosam mortem intemerata fide progressi nunc Martyres appellantur." Lib. xxii. cap. 11. But Antoninus was entirely ignorant of the Christian religion: We have shewn above what kept him from the knowledge of it. The historian knew it well, as appears from the character he gives it, of *absoluta & simplex*; and the dying in defence of such a religion could not but be, in his opinion, *mors gloriosa*: he being, as appears throughout his history, a *religious Theist*, and untainted with the *Naturalism* of *Tacitus*; for Christianity had produced this good effect in the quarter of its enemies, that it had entirely discredited the schools of Strato and Epicurus, as Julian himself informs us. Ammianus, then, was Pagan, if his religion may be gathered from the reflections he makes upon his facts. It is true, this way of reasoning cannot be safely applied to any but to an original Writer of History. Compilers and Abbreviators of other men's works are not supposed to have any sense of their own; they take their colours, like the Camelion, from the various matter on which

the very foundations of human credit; and it might as well be questioned whether Cæsar was assaulted in the senate, as whether Julian *attempted* to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem.

What now was the condition of the church at this juncture! and how were the fears of the good people alarmed! It had long combated, and at length triumphed over, the prejudices of the people, the arts of the philosophers, and the violence of civil power. It had bent the obstinacy of superstition by the superior force of miracles: it had confounded the meretricious confidence of Grecian Sophistry, by the simple majesty of Truth; and had wearied out the rage of tyranny, by constancy and contempt of suffering. But it was now summoned to a severer trial, and pushed upon the very crisis of its fate. Its enemies, supported by the whole power of the empire, had brought a decisive scheme to its projection; a scheme that was to reflect eternal dishonour upon the *Oracles of Truth*. The credit of God's servants, the authority of his word, and the very pretensions of revelation, were all vitally interested in the event. The long struggle between SUPERSTITION and RELIGION was now to be finally decided.

they feed; and, with the facts, often epitomize the sentiments of their originals. George Elmacine, an Eastern Christian, whose chronicle of the Saracens is translated from the Arabic by Erpenius into Latin, and by Vattier into French, is so regularly changeable in this respect, that Vattier very justly says of him, "Quand il parle de quelque chose concernant la religion de "Mahomet, on diroit qu'il est Mahometan: Quand il parle des "Catholiques, qu'il est Catholique: Quand il parle des Jacobites, "de mesme." The translator's reflection upon it is extraordinary, "Grand perfection, à mon advis, pour un historien: pour un "historien Chrestien, je n'en parle point." Every one sees the ridicule. However the maxim he had in view is a good one, *That the historian should not appear to be of any sect or party*. But this is very different from being of *all* in their turns.

decided. The God of the Christians was publicly challenged: his power was defied to protect his Dispensation against this impending stroke. Destitute of all human aid, their only reliance was on heaven. And no *believer*, but must conclude, that God would indeed interpose to vindicate the character of his Son: no *man*, but must confess, that to support a Religion like this, was an occasion worthy the interposition of the Lord of all things.

Well, the impious attack was made; and the expected protection afforded *. The same great and impartial historian, who acquaints us with the attempt, informs us likewise of the defeat of it. His account is in these words: "Julian (having been already thrice "consul) taking Sallust, prefect of the several Gauls, "for his colleague, entered a fourth time on this high "magistracy. It appeared strange to see a private "man associated with Augustus: a thing, which, "since the consulate of Dioclesian and Aristobulus, "history afforded no example of. A. [illegible] though his "sensibility of the many and great events, which this "year was likely to produce, made him very anxious "for the future, yet he both pushed on the various "and complicated preparatives for this expedition "with the utmost application, and, having an eye in "every quarter, and being desirous to eternize his "reign by the greatness of his atchievements, he pro-"jected to rebuild, at an immense expense, the proud "and magnificent temple of Jerusalem; which (after "many combats, attended with much bloodshed on

* τότε δὴ Κύριλλος ὁ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων Ἐπίσκοπος, τὸ τοῦ Προφήτου Δανιὴλ κατὰ νοῦν ἐλάμβανεν, ὅπερ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις Εὐαγγελίοις ἐπεσφραγίσατο, πολλοῖς τε προέλεγεν, ὡς ἄρα νῦν ἥκει ὁ καιρὸς, ὅτε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον οὐκ ἂν μένοι εἰς τὸν ναὸν, ἄλλα τὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος λόγιον πληρωθήσεται. Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. cap. 20.

 "both

" both sides, during the siege by Vespasian) was, " with great difficulty, taken and destroyed by Titus. " He committed the conduct of this affair to ALYPIUS " of Antioch, who formerly had been lieutenant in " Britain. When, therefore, this Alypius had set " himself to the vigorous execution of his charge, in " which he had all the assistance that the governor " of the province could afford him, horrible balls of " fire, breaking out near the foundations, with fre- " quent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, " from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and " blasted workmen; and the victorious element con- " tinuing, in this manner, obstinately and resolutely " bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, Alypius " thought best to give over the enterprize *."

Thus did the vigilance of Providence not only vindicate the honour of our holy faith in the open view of all men, but, in its goodness, secured the *memory* of this impious attempt by the testimony of the most unexceptionable witness. For were infidelity itself, when

* [redacted] jam ter consul adscito in collegium trabeæ Salu[redacted] præfecto per Gallias, quater ipse amplissimum inierat magistratum: & videbatur novum, adjunctum esse Augusto privatum, quod post Diocletianum & Aristobulum nullus meminerat gestum. Et licet accidentium varietatem sollicita mente præcipiens, multiplicatos expeditionis apparatis flagranti studio perurgeret: diligentiam tamen ubique dividens, imperiique sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam templum, quod post multa & interneciva certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito, ægre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis: negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum. Amm. Marc. lib. xxiii. cap. 1.

it

it would evade the force of evidence, to prescribe what qualities it expected in a faultless testimony, it could invent none but what might be found in the historian here produced. He was a Pagan, and so not prejudiced in favour of Christianity: He was a dependent, a follower, and a profound admirer of Julian, and so not inclined to report any thing to his dishonour: He was a lover of truth, and so would not relate what he knew, or but suspected, to be false: He had great sense, improved by the study of philosophy and knowledge of the world, and so would not easily suffer himself to be deceived: he was not only contemporary to the fact; but, at the time it happened, resident near the place: He recorded the event not on its first report, when, in the relation of journalary occurrences, much falsehood blends itself with truth; but after time and inquiry, which separates this impure mixture, had confirmed what really happened: He related it not as an uncertain report or hearsay, with diffidence; but as a notorious fact, at that time, no more questioned in Asia, than the project and success of the Persian expedition: He inserted it not for any partial purpose in support or confutation of any system; in defence or discredit of any character: he delivered it in no cursory or transient manner, nor in a loose or private memoir; but gravely and deliberately, as the natural and necessary part of a composition the most useful and important, a general history of the empire; on the complete performance of which the author was so intent, that he exchanged a court life, for one of study and contemplation; and chose Rome, the great repository of the proper materials, for the place of his retirement.

CHAP. IV.

BUT the evidence given by the adversaries of our faith to the truth of this illustrious miracle does not rest upon a single witness: I propose to shew, that Libanius, the friend and favourite of Julian, and even JULIAN himself, whose impiety brought this disgrace upon Paganism, have both confessed the hand by which he was *overcome*; though with that obscurity, and confusion of tongue, which always attends the graceless shame of impenitent offenders.

And I shall be the fuller in weighing the value of their testimony, as it hath hitherto, I think, been entirely overlooked, and, by reason of an affected disguise, passed the critics unobserved.

Libanius, in the *History of his own Life*, speaking of the fate of Julian, says, "The Persians, indeed, "were informed by a deserter, of the state to which "fortune had now reduced our affairs: but not a "single man * amongst us at Antioch, knew any "thing of the matter. It is true, the calamity seemed "to have been foretold by certain *earthquakes in* "*Palestine*, which overthrew some cities, and da- "maged others. For it appeared to us, as if God "had presignified some great event by these dis- "asters: and, while we were making our vows for "averting the evil we apprehended, came a mes-

* Ἀνθρώπων μὲν οὐδείς—The words are remarkable, and, I suspect, *emphatical*. It looks as if he used them to discredit a common report then in the mouths of the people, and which hath since figured in ecclesiastical history, to this effect, "That Libanius, about this time, meeting a certain schoolmaster in Antioch, asked him, in derision, What the carpenter's son was doing? To which the other replied, Making a coffin for your hero."

"senger,

"senger, &c. *." Again, in his *funeral oration on Julian's death*, he says, "The temple of Apollo consumed by fire, presaged this misfortune—as did "those *earthquakes* which shook all the land, the messengers, as it were, of the following disorders and "confusion †." It can admit no doubt but that the *earthquakes* spoken of in both passages, and said to have happened *before* the death of Julian, are the same. The *first* says they were in Palestine; the *second* fixes them to the time of burning the *temple at Daphne*: all which laid together brings us directly to the *earthquake at Jerusalem*. And though, either out of malice, imperfect information, or wrong conception of what he heard, he lessens the event by the omission of one circumstance, and aggravates it by the invention of others, yet the characteristic marks of *time* and *place*, which he has left to it, prevent his putting the change upon us, if that was his intention, as it seems to have been, if we reflect, that the circumstance of *destroying cities*, and *shaking the whole empire*, belong to an earthquake which happened about a year and half after Julian's death ‡, and of which he was well apprised, as appears by his *oration to avenge the death of Julian*, addressed to Theodosius:

* Τῷ μὲν δὴ Πέρσῃ, παρ' αὐτομόλου τινὸς μαθεῖν ὑπῆρξεν, ἐν ὅτῳ εἴη τύχης. ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς Ἀντιοχεῦσιν, ἀνθρώπων μὲν οὐδείς. Σεισμοὶ δὲ ἐγίγνοντο τοῦ κακοῦ μήνυται, πόλεων τῶν ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ [Παλαιστίνῃ] Συρίᾳ, τῶν μὲν μέρη· τὰς δὲ ὅλας κατενεγκόντες. ἐδόκει γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς, μεγάλοις πάθεσι, μέγα σημαίνειν. εὐχομένων δὲ μὴ τὰ ὄντα δοξάζειν, πικρὸν, &c.

† Τοῦτο ἦν νεὼς Ἀπόλλωνος πυρὶ δαπανώμενος—τοῦτο σεισμοὶ γῆν πᾶσαν δονοῦντες μελλούσης ἄγγελοι ταραχῆς τε καὶ ἀκοσμίας.

‡ Kal. Aug. consule Valentiniano primum cum fratre horrendi terrores per omnem orbis ambitum grassati sunt subiti.—concutitur omnis terreni STABILITAS ponderis, MARIque dispulsum retro fluctibus evolutis abscessit.—innumera quædam in civitatibus & ubi reperta sunt ædificia complanarunt.—Am. Marc. l. xxvi. c. 10.

in which he tells the emperor, the Gods were angry that Julian's death had not been hitherto avenged: and had given evident marks of their displeasure by the frequent slaughters of the Roman people; and a dreadful earthquake, which shook both *land* and *sea**. Hitherto Libanius, notwithstanding the disguisements taken notice of above, hath reasonably well distinguished these two different earthquakes, the one in Palestine, and the other over all the Roman empire: by expressly affirming, that the first happened *before* the death of Julian; and the second, some time *after*. Yet, in another place, in his *oration on the death of Julian*, he seems totally to have confounded them with one another †.

But the carelessness or the perversity of the writers of these times, whether Christians or Pagans, is equally to be lamented. We have observed the arts Libanius employs to hide the *earthquake at Jerusalem*, and seen with what pomp he ascribes the disaster occasioned by *that*, which happened under the first consulate of Valentinian and his brother, to the anger of the gods for the unavenged murder of Julian. On which account, I suppose, it is, that Sozomene affirms, that this earthquake happened in the time of Julian ‡, and makes it one of the marks of God's displeasure at his apostasy. So again because Li-

* Ὁ σὸς δὲ φόνος ὅτε τῇδε, ὅτε ἐν Ῥώμῃ, δεκαμήνου ἐχούσης μηνός, δι' ὧν οἱ μὲν ἀπέθνησκον, οἱ δὲ ἔμελλον. ὁ φόβος. ΓΗΝ τε ἔσεισε καὶ ΘΑΛΑΤΤΑΝ. c. 10.

† Ἡ μὲν γε γῆ, καλῶς τε ἤσθιλο τῷ πάθει—ἀπουσιασμένη, καθάπερ ἵππος ἀκοῦσάτην, σεῖσις τόσας καὶ τόσας· ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ σοῦλλας τὰς Λιβύων ἀπόσας, &c.

‡ Ἀμιλεῖοι παρὰ πάλαι τὸν χρόνον ταυτησὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἀγανακτῶν ὁ Θεὸς ἐφαίνετο—τῆς τε γὰρ γῆς συνεχῶς ὑποχαλεπαινόντων σεισμῶν τινασσομένης—συμβάλλω δὲ ἐξ ὧν ἐπυθόμην, ἡ βασιλεύσασα αὐτὰ κατὰ τὸ δεύτερον σχῆμα τῆς βασιλείας ὕβρισε καὶ τὸ συμβὰν τοῖς πρὸς Λίγυπτον Ἀλεξανδρεῦσι γίγνεται πάθος, &c. Lib. vi. c. 2.

banius

banius had with excessive impudence accused the Christians of the death of Julian, Gregory Naz. to be even with him, charges Julian with the murder of Constantius. Each, I dare say, with equal justice; both, I am well satisfied, with the same spirit.

I come now to the testimony of Julian. His letter to the *community of the Jews* has been already mentioned. From that part of it, wherein he informs them how he had punished such as had given their people unjust vexation, it appears to have been written early in his reign; on his first coming to Constantinople, when he purged the city and palace of spies, informers, and the like pests of a corrupted court *. The principal design of it is to acquaint them with his

* Sozomene takes notice of this letter, καὶ πατριάρχαις καὶ ἀρχηγοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ πλήθει ἔγραψεν, εὐχεσθαι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλείας. Notwithstanding which those who have conveyed it down to us have stampt this mark of doubt and suspicion on the face of it, εἰ γνήσιος. Without question, they believed it to be forged by the Jews. The writer of it styles the injuries offered to the Jews, *impious*; as if they were a holy nation—Καὶ τὸ τῆς τοιαύτης δυσφημίας ἀσέβημα ἐνταῦθα ἐβιασάμην τῆσαι: tells them that he had precipitated the delators into horrible dungeons with his *own hands*, οὓς μὲν ἐγὼ ἐν χερσὶν ἐμαῖς λαβόμενος, εἰς βόθρον ὦσας ὤλεσα: calls the patriarch *brother*, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἴουλον τὸν αἰδεσιμώτατον πατριάρχην: and promises, that when he had restored their city, he would come thither, and live and worship with them. All these particulars, the critics conceived to smell strongly of imposture.

But what probably most confirmed their suspicions, was the *use* the Jews made of it, to evade a miracle that so much humbled them: We see it only promises their restoration *after* his Persian expedition. And one R. David Gans, of the sixteenth century, in the second part of his book, called Zamach, quoted by Wagenseilius, in his Tela ignea Satanæ, p. 231. appears to have made this very use of it. "Julianus Cæsar præcepit ut "restitueretur templum sanctissimum, magno cum decore & "pulchritudine, huicque rei ipse sumtus suppeditavit. Verum "cœlitus

his purpose to rebuild their city, on his return from the Persian war. And without doubt he then intended

" cœlitus impedimentum injectum est ne perficeretur fabrica, " NAM Cæsar in bello Persico periit."

But what Greg. Nazianzen, in his second *Invective*, tells us of the conference that followed this letter, plainly shews it to be genuine. Julian, he says, assured the leaders of the Jews, he had discovered, from their sacred books, that the time of their restoration was at hand. ἐπιθειάζων τε δῆθεν ἐκ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς βίβλων καὶ ἀπορρήτων. ὡς νῦν αὐτοῖς ἀποκείμενον εἴη καλλιθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν καὶ νεὼν ἀναδείμασθαι, καὶ τῶν παλαίων τὸ κράτος ἀνανεώσασθαι καὶ ἀποκρυπλόμενος ἐυνοίας πλάσμαλι τὴν ἐπίνοιαν.—It is not a mere curiosity to inquire, what prophecy it was, that Julian perverted; because it tends to confirm the truth of Nazianzen's relation. I have sometimes thought it might possibly be the words of the Septuagint, in Dan. ix. 27. Συντέλεια δοθήσεται ἐπὶ τὴν ἐρήμωσιν. The ambiguity of which Julian took the advantage of (against Hellenistic Jews, who, it is probable, knew no more of the original than himself) as signifying, *the tribute shall be given to the desolate*, instead of, *the consummation shall be poured upon the desolate*. For the letter in question tells us, he had remitted their *tribute*; and by so doing, we see, was for passing himself upon them for a kind of second Cyrus.

All this (that is to say, the authenticity of the letter, the truth of Nazianzen's relation, and this conjecture concerning the prophecy Julian pretended to go upon) seems greatly to be supported by what the Christian writers say of the behaviour of the Jews while the project was in agitation. Socrates assures us, that they menaced the Christians, and threatened to treat them as they themselves had been treated by the Romans. L. iii. c. 20.—φοβεροὺς δὲ τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς ἐπιδείκνυσαν ἑαυτοὺς, ἠλαζονεύοντό τε κατ' αὐτῶν, ἐπαπειλοῦντες τοσαῦτα ποιήσειν, ὅσα αὐτοὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίων πάλαι πεπόνθασι. And Rufinus says, *they were as vain as if they had had a prophet of their own at their head.* And this they might well be, when they had an emperor who promised to live and worship with them, and set himself up for the restorer foretold by their prophets.

There is only one thing in the letter, which remains to be accounted for; and that is, the strange boast of his personal atchievement, in *thrusting down the delators into dungeons with his own hands:* in which the Imperial character is so little preserved,

tended to defer the re-establishment of the Jewish religion till that war was at an end. But his various attacks upon Christianity not succeeding to his hopes, he grew enraged by his defeat, and resolved to put this last effort of his malice in immediate execution.

We may be assured, this letter had brought the principal Jews, from all quarters of the world, to court. The manner in which he appeared to interest himself in their quarrel, could not but persuade them, that the apostate from Christianity was become more than half a proselyte to Judaism. While he, on his part, flattered himself, that those who adhered so obstinately to bloody sacrifices might be easily cajoled into idolatry.

These, apparently, were the men, then residing at court, and waiting for his favours, whom, Chrysostome and Gregory Nazianzen tell us, he called together, to inquire, Why they did not offer sacrifices as the *law* directed; at a time when the empire stood so much in need of the divine protection, and the emperor was so well disposed to implore it from all quarters. They replied, that it was not lawful to sacrifice but in the *temple of Jerusalem* only. This was what He would be at: so he took the advantage of their answer, to facilitate his secret purpose; which was to give the lie at once to all the prophets and messengers of God.

For

preserved, that the learned M. de la Bleterie is almost tempted, on this single circumstance, to give up the letter for a forgery. But he here forgets what he himself had before mentioned of the strange escapes of this fantastic monarch. "Saint Gregoire "Nazianze dit, que Julien chassoit à coups de *pié* & de *poing* "de pauvres gens qui venoient lui demander des graces. Ces "*pauvres gens* (says M. de la Bleterie) pouvoient bien être des "DELATEURS." Vie de Julien, p. 314. 2d edit.

For we are by no means to suppose him so ignorant as not to know what the *law* in this case required. That very letter to the *community* plainly insinuates he did know it. His acquaintance with Scripture must have informed him of it: for if there was any part to which he would give greater attention than the rest, it was the ritual of sacrifices, a species of worship, to which he was inordinately addicted. Besides, in his *discourse* against the Christian Religion, he occasionally, but in express words, declares, that it was of the nature of the Mosaic Law, to offer sacrifices at Jerusalem only *. But as this *discourse* was written some time after the consultation in question, I would lay the less weight upon it.

However, no one, I think, can doubt, but that the whole conference was a farce; that Julian only wanted a screen for his impiety; and that the pretence of procuring the means of their intercession with the God of the universe, for the prosperity of the empire, was no other than a decent cover for putting this last effort of his malice in present execution. The Jews eagerly fell in with his project; and the issue was as we have related it.

This great event happened in the beginning of the year CCCLXIII, as appears from the words of Ammianus Marcellinus, quoted above. Julian, who then wintered at Antioch, was preparing for his Persian expedition; for which he did not set out till the month of March. So unexpected a traverse, we must suppose, would be immediately carried to him †, with all the circumstances that attended it: Alypius could

* Ὑμεῖς δὲ οἱ τὴν καινὴν θυσίαν εὑρόντες, οὐδὲν δεόμενοι τῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ, ἀστὴ τίνος οὐ θύετε; - apud Cyril, p. 306. Spanh. ed.

† ταῦτα ἤκουσε μὲν Ἰουλιανός. Theod. l. iii. c. 20.

not

not but assure him, that the repeated eruptions made it impracticable to persist in the attempt; and that the consumption of the materials utterly disabled his agents from speedily renewing it. What his first sentiments were, on this occasion, we have no certain or particular account: how he resented the disgrace in his cooler hours, I am now going to shew.

There is, amongst the writings of Julian, a notable fragment of an *oration*, or *epistle*, call it which you will, first given us by Petavius, wherein the emperor, with great abilities and learning, prescribes and marks out a method to reform Paganism, and set it up for a rival to the Gospel, in all the plausible pretences to piety and virtue. This, and his books against the Christian Religion, were the two master wheels of the same machine: the one was to degrade Christianity, the other to advance superstition:—and therefore it is no wonder we find them written at the same time. St. Jerom expressly says*, that the books against our holy faith were composed during the Persian expedition. Libanius, indeed, intimates, they were written in his winter quarters at Antioch. Their

* Ep. lxxxiii. ad magnum oratorem. And his historian tells us, that, even to the last, while harassed with famine and the Persian cavalry, he continued to employ the silent hours of the night, in his usual sophistic exercises of reading and composing: which Ammianus, to do his master honour, says, was in imitation of Julius Cæsar.—Ipse autem ad sollicitam suspensamque quietem paulisper protractus, cum somno (ut solebat) depulso, ad æmulationem Cæsaris Julii quædam sub pellibus scribens, obscuro noctis, altitudine sensus cujusdam philosophi teneretur, vidit squalidius, ut confessus est proximis, speciem illam genii publici, &c. lib. xxv. c. 2. And it is not improbable but his favourite Libanius had those very writings in his eye, when he said that the life of his master, Julian, was then equally divided between his cares for *religion* and the *state*. Οὗτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ μερίσας αὐτὸν τὸν βίον εἴς τε τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν ὅλων βουλὰς, εἴς τε τὰς περὶ βωμὸν διαιρέσεις. De ulcisc. Julian. nece.

accounts

accounts may be easily reconciled, in supposing that this part was planned and begun before his remove. However, the other part, the directions for the reformation of Paganism, was as late as the Persian expedition; for this, we have the author's own word, where, speaking of the customary honours paid to the Gods, he says—"which not THREE years, nor "three thousand have established: but all past ages, "amongst all the nations upon earth *." By the *three years* he evidently alludes to his restoration of idolatry; which, at any time sooner than the Persian expedition, was not intitled to so high a date. For he was first saluted Augustus in the spring of the year CCCLX, and the Persian expedition was in the spring CCCLXIII.

At this time, therefore, he had well digested his defeat at Jerusalem. What effects it left upon his temper, the following passage of this fragment will inform us; where, after having justified the Gods for suffering their temples, images, and most devout worshippers to be injuriously treated, he goes on thus:—"Let no man, therefore, because he hath seen or "heard of those who have insulted their images and "*Temples*, entertain any doubts concerning their "superintendency. For this reason too, let them not "think to delude us with their sophistry, nor terrify "us with the cry of *Providence*. For, the prophets "amongst the Jews, who so much upbraid us with "these disasters, what will they say to their own "temple? that temple of theirs, which has been now "a third time destroyed †, and is not raised again "to

* —ἧς ἐνομοθέτησαν οὐκ ἐνιαυτοὶ τρεῖς, οὐδὲ τρισχίλιοι· πᾶς δὲ ὁ προλαβὼν αἰὼν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς τῆς γῆς ἔθνεσιν. p. 294. Spanh. Ed.

† The learned J. A. Fabricius thinks this τρίτον ἀνατραπέντος includes

"to this day. I say not this to upbraid them; for "I myself, after so long a desolation, would have "rebuilt it*, in honour of the God which was there "worshipped. But I now mention it only as I was "willing to shew, that nothing human is exempt "from the injuries of time. As to the prophets, "who write in this manner, they merely rave, and "cant to the capacities of dreaming old women. Not "that I would insinuate, the God they worship is "not great and mighty: but this I say, he hath no "good prophets, nor interpreters of his will, amongst "them.

includes the defeat of Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple; and so, in his *Lux Evangelii*, he brings it to prove Julian's own acknowledgement of the miracle: in which he has been followed by M. de la Bleterie and others. But 1. Defeating an attempt to rebuild, cannot, in any known figure of speech, be called the overthrow of a building. 2. Ἐγειρομένου δὲ οὐδὲ πω can never be said of a building destroyed but two months before. In a word, Fabricius is mistaken; the three subversions here meant, were—that by the Assyrians,—that by Herod, the son of Antipater,—and that by Vespasian. And though Herod's demolition of it was only in order to rebuild it more magnificently, yet it was such a destruction as Julian might properly enough urge for the support of his argument, against an objection, that supposed *stability and duration* amongst the qualities to be looked for in the domicile of the *true* God; which the Pagan temples not having, were concluded to belong to the *false*.—Or it may possibly be, that, instead of Herod's *demolition*, he might allude to the profanation of it by Antiochus, as a learned friend suggests. But what is decisive against Fabricius's interpretation is this: Julian in one and the same paragraph could never call his project a destruction of the temple, and an attempt to rebuild it.

* ὡσγε τοσούτοις ὕστερον χρόνοις ἀναρῆσασθαι διενοήθην αὐτὸν—I do not urge this independent declaration (which implies some hindrance of his purpose) against the unbelievers, because they will say, "the hindrance appears to have been the Persian ex- "pedition; Julian having told the Jews, in his Letter still extant, "that he would rebuild their temple when he had ended that "war, which implies his inability of doing it before."

"them. The reason is, they never applied themselves to purge and purify the mind in the circle of human science, nor tried to open their eyes which ignorance had shut up, nor strove to drive away the darkness in which they lay involved: but are as men, who through mists or clouds see the great light of heaven * neither clearly nor distinctly, and mistake that ethereal splendor for an impure terrestrial fire; and, stark blind to all nature working round them, roar out with frantic vehemence, *Fear and tremble, ye inhabitants of earth! Fire, lightning, the sword, darts, death*, and all the frightful words that express that one destructive property of FIRE. But of these things it is more expedient to speak in private, where we may shew, how much these masters of wisdom, who pretend to be sent from God, are inferior to our Poets †."

The

* Julian, by φῶς μέγα, means the *Sun*, as before, Θεὸν μέγαν, *the God of the Universe*. For, φῶς καθαρὸν, which follows, was, I believe, never used by these fanatic platonists, for a *terrestrial* fire, it being the term they gave to their *holy light*, or αὐτοπτὸν ἄγαλμα. Julian thought nothing more holy than the Sun.—He did not add the article, because he is here expressing the idea of the mistaken beholder,—*a great light*, though, by *that*, he himself meant, *the great light*.

† Μηδεὶς οὖν ἀπιστείτω θεοῖς ὁρῶν καὶ ἀκούων ὡς ἐνύβρισάν τινες εἰς τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ τοὺς ΝΑΟΥΣ. Μηδεὶς οὖν ἀπατάτω λόγοις· μηδὲ ταραττέτω περὶ τῆς προνοίας ἡμᾶς· οἱ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὀνειδίζοντες τοιαῦτα, τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ Προφῆται, τί περὶ τοῦ νεὼ φήσουσι; τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς τρίτον ἀνατραπέντος, ἐγειρομενοῦ δὲ οὐδὲ νῦν· Ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπον οὐκ ὀνειδίζων ἐκείνοις, ὅσγε τοσούτοις ὕστερον χρόνοις ἀναστήσασθαι διενοήθην αὐτὸν εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ κληθέντος ἐπ' αὐτῷ, θεοῦ νυνὶ δὲ ἐχρησάμην αὐτῷ, δεῖξαι βουλόμενος, ὅτι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων οὐδὲν ἄφθαρτον εἶναι δύναται· καὶ οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα γράφοντες ἐλήρουν προφῆται, γραϊδίοις ψυχροῖς ὁμιλοῦντες. Οὐθὲν, δὲ, οἶμαι, κωλύει τὸν μὲν θεὸν εἶναι μέγαν οὐ μὴν σπουδαίων προφητῶν οὐδὲ ἐξηγητὼν τυχεῖν, αἴτιον δι' ὅτι τὴν ἑαυτῶν ψυχὴν, οὐ παρέσχον ἀποκαθᾶραι τοῖς ἐγκυκλίοις μαθήμασιν· οὔτε ἀνοῖξαι μεμυκότα λίαν τὰ ὄμματα· οὐδὲ ἀνακαθᾶραι τὴν ἐπικειμένην αὐτοῖς ἀχλύν. Ἀλλ' οἷον φῶς μέγα δὲ ἐμέχλης οἱ ἄνθρωποι βλέποντες οὐ καθαρῶς,

The reader, who consults the fragment from whence this long passage is transcribed, will perceive, that it is a mere digression. But if it were foreign to his subject, we shall see it concerned a matter very intimate to his thoughts. The persecuted church of Christ was, at this time, triumphant, and loudly exulting in the divine protection so miraculously afforded it. The apostate, when the power of the empire failed him, had recourse to this last expedient, the arms of calumny, to vent his rage, and cover the shame of his disappointment. And then it was that, exchanging the *Imperial* for the *Sophist's throne* *, he composed the two discourses mentioned above. Now, to be altogether silent on a subject, that was plainly the occasion of his writing, would have been an affectation that had rather betrayed, than covered, his self-conviction. On the other hand, the soldier's pride of heart, the pedant's contempt for his unclassical adversaries, and the monarch's delicacy for the imperial dignity, would not suffer him to enter on a formal altercation. Besides, in this case, he must either have confessed or denied the fact. The one would have completed the triumph of his adversaries; and the other offended the ingenuity of his friends. He therefore chose a middle way: and, under shew of exposing the denunciations of the Jewish prophets against past idolatries, as the ravings of enthusiasm, he covertly condemns

καθαρῶς, οὐδὲ εἰλικρινῶς, αὐτὸ δὲ ἐκεῖνο νενομικότες οὐχὶ φῶς κάθαρον, ἀλλὰ ΠΥΡ, καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸ πάντων ὄντες ἀθέατοι, βοῶσι μεγάλα· φρίττετε· φοβεῖσθε· πῦρ, φλὸξ, θάνατος, μαχαιρα, ῥομφαία· πολλοῖς ὀνόμασι μίαν ἐξηγούμενοι τὴν βλαπτικὴν τοῦ πυρὸς δήναμιν· ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ μὲ τούτων ἰδία βέλτιον παραστῆσαι, πόσῳ φαυλότεροι τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν οὕτω γεγόνασι ποιητῶν, οἱ τῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγων διδάσκαλοι. p. 295. Spanh. Ed.

* ἐπὶ θρόνον τινὸς ὑψηλοῦ μάλα σοφιστικῶς καὶ σοβαρῶς. Themist. Orat. 1.

condemns the present triumphs of the church as the workings of the same spirit, upon the ground of a natural event.

For, taking occasion (though the subject of the work before us was the *reformation* of Paganism) to vindicate that ancient worship from the dishonours it had from time to time suffered, in the overthrow of its temples and idols, he observes, that those who exulted most in its disgraces, the Jewish *prophets* (whose writings, indeed, abound with exclamations and denunciations on the folly of idolatry, the impuissance of idols, and the destruction to which both were devoted) had of all men the least reason to triumph; since their own TEMPLE had been thrice destroyed, and at that very time lay in ruins. This leads him to the subject he wanted to touch upon: he therefore adds, that he spoke this out of no ill-will to the *community of the Jews*, for that he was himself *desirous of rebuilding their temple*. No, but only to convince them that neither the overthrow of their temple, nor the temples of Paganism, was to be ascribed to *divine wrath*, but to the natural condition of earthly things. And, enraged at the contrary principle, which occasioned these exultations in the Christian church, he attempts to shew, in the character he gives of the Jewish prophets, which he trusted the intelligent reader would apply to the Christian ministers, that it was the issue of ignorance and superstition. These prophets he represents as despising human science, and acting upon the principles, and preaching to the capacities of ignorant and superstitious women, a character which was, and might be, objected to the Christian *ministry*, whose writings are full of exclamations against Grecian literature, but what by no means suited the Jewish *prophets*, who appear to have had

as much of the barbaric learning of those early times as any of their Pagan neighbours. But, lest this should not sufficiently mark his purpose, by an elegant similitude, in which he employs his favourite idol, the Sun, to shew the root of these superstitions to be the ignorance of nature; he makes those, whom he supposes under its illusions, to cry out in the very exclamations that then resounded from one end of the Christian world to the other, *Fear and tremble, ye inhabitants of earth!—Fire, lightning, the sword, darts, death, and all the frightful words* (says he) *which express that one destructive property of fire.*—By which he plainly enough insinuates that this boasted miracle, by which his purpose was defeated was only a natural eruption: but that the Christians were as ignorant of natural causes as men who seeing the Sun through mists mistake it for a globe of terrestrial fire. But as if now he had run riot, he suddenly checks himself, and observes, that this was a subject properer for a *private* audience. And here the genius of Paganism came to his aid very opportunely; which, when pinched and distressed, was always as ready to cry out MYSTERY, as he says the church was to call out FIRE. To say the truth, it was full time to draw back. He had confessed his inclination and purpose of rebuilding the Jewish temple; and had evidently enough hinted at the exultations of the Christians on his defeat; so that he had indeed nothing to do, but to put off the cause to a *private* audience.

On this exposition of the passage, let me just make the following remarks.

1. If we understand Julian's reflections as *indefinite*, nothing can be more disjointed or absurd. The Christians of that time were wont to draw an argument of

the impuissance of polytheism from the repeated disgraces the heathen temples and their idols had suffered in every period of the world. Julian undertakes to solve this objection; but, instead of directing his answer to the Christians, who now make it against *him*, he retorts it upon the Jews, who, many ages ago, had made it against *others*. These he wantonly provokes at a time his views made them necessary to him. Again, he characterizes these *prophets* in so ambiguous and loose a manner, that you may either take them for the writers of the Old Testament, or the heads of the Jewish community of that time: which no rule of composition can account for, but that which allows cautious writers to explain one system of things by the names that belong to another. Lastly, he speaks of *terrifying exclamations* as made by the prophets, which they never did make; and which, though made by Christ and his Apostles, are applied by them to the punishments of a *future state*; whereas he is speaking of what the worshippers of one God say of the dispensation of his providence in the *present*. We must conclude therefore, that the exclamations ridiculed in this passage must needs be those which the recent event at Jerusalem had just occasioned.

2. Take the passage in this *determined* sense, and nothing can be more artful than the conduct of the imperial sophist. Our religion was at this juncture properly victorious. It was exulting over Paganism in the destruction of the temple at Daphné *; it was exulting

* The Oracle of Apollo in the temple at Daphné near Antioch had been dumb for some time. When Julian came thither, he urged the God himself to declare the cause of his silence. The Oracle replied, that he was hindered by the bones of St. Babylas, which were then inshrined in his neighbourhood. These Julian

exulting over Judaism in the divine opposition to the restoration of that at Jerusalem; and over the Apostate Emperor in the disgraces of both. This spirit Julian wanted to repress and mortify. In the case of Apollo's temple he had no reason to be delicate. As to *that* of the God of Israel, we have shewn, it would not bear a professed mention. How has he conducted his discourse? By retorting upon the Jews, in the case of their old ruined temple, the Christian objection arising from that at Daphné: which recrimination served a double purpose; to introduce what he had to say on his own baffled attempt; and to say it (which was the point) obscurely and darkly. Thus the Christian triumphs, which he introduces to ridicule, are so represented as to have a more obvious reference to the temple at Daphné, and a covert one to the temple at Jerusalem, by the choice of several words and circumstances which necessarily extend it to that further meaning. Thus, for instance, the circumstance of their *ignorance of nature*, τῶν περὶ αὐτὸ πάντων ὄντες ἀθέατοι, by which he would insinuate, that the readiness in believing miracles arises from that ignorance. But he could never intend this observation should be applied to the temple at Daphné, which he did not believe was set on fire by lightning. And thus again the words θάνατος, μάχαιρα, βομφαία, *the sword, darts, death,* which he adds to πῦρ, φλόξ, *fire, lightning,* necessarily carry us to Jerusalem, where the eruption occasioned much human slaughter, whereas nothing suffered at Antioch but the temple of Apollo. And with these views the retortion on the Jewish writers will not appear so forced and unnatural. It was

Julian ordered to be removed: And soon after the temple at Daphné was burnt to the ground. The Christians (says Sozomene) affirmed it was by lightning from Heaven: but the Pagans laughed at this, and said it was fired by the Galileans.

was a Christian practice to apply the language of the Old Testament to the events of the gospel dispensation: and the disgrace of idols and idolaters being the constant subject of those writings, we may be sure, the Christians would not fail to apply every thing of this nature to the present occasion *. So that those *scriptures* being employed as divine decisions to confirm their cause, naturally became the object of Julian's resentment.

3. This likewise well accounts for the title of Prophets, which he gives these Jewish writers or rulers; and for his abuse of them under that character. It was to prevent the reader's stopping at Apollo's temple, when it was the writer's purpose to lead him silently to that of Jerusalem: to which only the Jewish prophets and their *prophecies* had any relation. These things then we may consider as certain marks of his further meaning. And, indeed, if he had it not, what reason was there for being so shy in the mention

* Theodoret tells the following story, very apposite to this subject: He says, that when Julian was at Antioch, one Publia, a venerable matron, and at the head of a community of virgins devoted to religion, took occasion, whenever the Emperor went that way, to chant louder than was the custom, in defiance of his impiety: they chose too to sing those psalms of David which ridicule the vanity and impuissance of idols, ἃ τῶν εἰδώλων καταγελᾷ τὴν ἀσθένειαν, and particularly the following verses. *The Idols of the Heathens are but silver and gold, the work of men's hands: they that make them are like unto them, and so are all they that put their trust in them.* Julian (as he had reason) was offended with this insult, and, as often as he passed by, ordered them to be silent. Instead of obeying, Publia exhorted her virgins to strain their throats still higher, and especially when they came to this verse: *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.* This provoked the Emperor to order one of his guards to bring out the old woman and box her ears, which (says the historian) Publia esteemed a great honour, and went on to torment the apostate with her psalm-singing, in the same manner as the author of the Psalms tormented the evil spirit in Saul. L. iii. c. xix.

of

of that idol temple? its destruction did not at all distress him; as he believed it to be set on fire by the Christians. But, in the other case, he had to do with the God of the Christians; and he was not yet in an humour, whatever he might be afterwards, to cry, *Vicisti, Galilæe.*

4. It being now seen, that Julian in this passage evidently refers to his defeat, the covert manner in which he owns himself overcome adds greatly to the weight of it. For no suspicion can lie against so oblique a reference to the fact, even in the opinion of those who could smell forgery in an open and direct confession. An impostor, *piously* disposed to procure Julian's testimony against himself, would never think of doing it so obscurely, as that it should escape the notice of those whom he principally intended to impose upon.

Thus far concerning the APOSTATE's own testimony. But as there were three parties interested in this affair, the Pagans, the Jews, and the Christians; our evidence might be thought defective, if any one of them were wanting on so important an occasion.

We shall therefore, in the next place, produce the testimony of a famous RABBI; who, though late in time, yet composed the work, from whence the following passage is taken, on the traditions and records of the several ages he writes of. This is the celebrated R. Gedaliah ben Joseph Jechaja; he lived in the fifteenth century, and, in his history called Schalscheleth Hakkabbala, expresses himself to this effect: "In the days of R. Channan and his brethren, "about the year of the world 4349, our annals tell "us, there was a great earthquake *over all the earth*; "by which the temple which the Jews had raised at

" Jerusalem with vast expence, at the command of " Julian the apostate, was thrown down. The day " after the earthquake, a dreadful fire fell from " heaven, which melted all the iron tools and instru- " ments employed about the work; and destroyed " many, nay incredible numbers of the Jews *." I will make two remarks on this testimony. 1. The historian's calling it an *earthquake over all the earth*, is in the language of the Jews; and the same with that of the Evangelist, who tells us, that at the crucifixion, *there was darkness over all the earth* †. 2. This story of a rebuilt temple, shews he had his materials neither from Pagan nor Christian writers; who are unanimous that no more than the foundations were prepared. And, as there is no visible purpose why he should invent it, we must conclude, he found it thus related in the annals of the rabbins; the composers of which might possibly draw this conclusion from what they found recorded of the immense contributions of their people. 3. The historian says, it was at the *command of Julian*; which, without bringing Christianity into the question, supplies his reader with a plausible account of this visible mark of the divine displeasure at the attempt ‡; and consequently affords his brethren a principle on which they might believe the fact, consistently with their profession of Judaism.

* In diebus R. Channan & sociorum ejus, anno circiter orbis conditi 4349, memorant libri annalium, magnum in orbe universo fuisse terræ motum, collapsumque esse templum quod struxerunt Judæi Hierosolymis, præcepto Cæsaris Juliani Apostatæ, impensis maximis. Postridie ejus diei [quo mota fuerat terra] de Cœlo ignis multus cecidit, ita ut omnia ferramenta illius ædificii liquescerent & amburerentur Judæi multi atque adeo innumerabiles. Apud Wagenseil, Tela ignea Satanæ

† Luke xxiii. 44. ‡ Book II. c. iv.

CHAP. V.

HERE then, for the present, we shall rest our evidence; ON THE CONFESSION OF OUR ADVERSARIES THEMSELVES: And, from the *nature of the* TESTIMONY, proceed to some considerations on the *nature of the* FACT, in order to the fuller establishment of this important truth.

One of the requisite qualities in a forged miracle, that pretends to live and do well, is, that the fact on which it rises be private, obscure, unconcerning, and remote from general observation. And though these circumstances may sometimes attend a *true* one; yet that is but accidental, and hurts not its credit, so long as it is accompanied (which it ever is) with others, that supply their defects. But for a forged miracle to affect the distinction of *public notoriety*, would be too impudent a reliance even on religious credulity. To feign a miracle on a civil fact, which must have passed in sight of a whole nation, would be rather an attempt to put out men's eyes, than to impose on their understandings. Hence it is we find, the *lying wonders* of him, *whose coming was after the working of Satan**, so well answer the description which He, who came with all the power of the Father, hath given us of every subtile Impostor in general, that *they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*

Now the PROJECT to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem was a public transaction, the most notorious and interesting of that age.

The PROJECTOR was no other than the Emperor

* 2 Thess. ii. 9.

of

of the world himself: a circumstance alone sufficient to draw the attention of the world upon it.

His ATTEMPT produced other circumstances that would obtrude themselves even on the most incurious. The principal Jews were called together from all quarters *: Alypius, a man of the first figure, was put at the head of the undertaking: immense quantities of materials were laid in; vast numbers of workmen were assembled; and the impotent triumphs of the Jews gave an eclat to every movement which the restless though determined spirit of Julian was hourly pushing forward.

The PLACE contributed no less to its notoriety. It was in the centre of the empire; and in the head quarters of the two religious parties that then divided it.

The TIME likewise was critical. The religious world had just suffered a surprising revolution. It had been suddenly brought back from the *new* opinions to a profession of the *old*. Yet the disgraced religion, by courage and constancy in suffering, still kept its enemies anxious amidst all their success, and fearful, amidst all their power, for what might be the final issue.

The ACTION too was capitally interesting: The design of the project was to give the last blow to the credit of Christianity. And the honour of the new and old profession was staked on the event.

We have shewn that every body understood Julian's purpose to be no other than to put a public affront upon Revelation. Paganism was big with

* —τούτων γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι [οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι] τῶν λόγων ἀσπασίως ἀκούσαντες, ἅπασιν τὰ προστεταγμένα τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ὁμοφύλοις ἐδήλωσαν. Οἱ δὲ πάντοθεν συνέθεον καὶ χρήματα καὶ προθυμίαν εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομίαν εἰσφέροντες. Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 20.

expectation.

expectation. The Church in general was alarmed; but the more knowing and pious amongst them, to the very last, mocked and defied the impiety of the attempt *.

Such were the various *passions and interests* which concurred with the *time* and *place*, to engage the attention, and excite the impatience of all men for the event.

But now, when full expectation on the one side, and continued alarms on the other, had set the world at gaze, the project suddenly disappeared. It was as it had never been; and the temple once more presented itself in its old ruins; but with a worse face, of horror and desolation. A surprising issue of so much determined power, and immense preparation!

A world, thus attentive and concerned, could not but be desirous of knowing the *cause* of so sudden a change of measures, if it were a change of measures, that influenced the event. Did the emperor relent? Did his agents fail in their obedience? or were the Jews, on better thoughts, become resigned to their visitation? Was the purpose diverted by a foreign invasion, or by domestic troubles? Did some hostile Barbarian, at that juncture, break in upon the empire; or some rebellious province suspend and weaken its authority? Or, lastly, did the Christians themselves defeat the insult, by opposing force to force? One or

* Cyrillus, post Maximum confessorem, Jerosolymis habebatur episcopus. Apertis igitur fundamentis, calces cæmentaque adhibita: nihil omnino deerat, quin die postera, veteribus deturbatis, nova jacerent fundamenta; cum tamen episcopus, diligenti consideratione habita, vel ex his quæ in Danielis prophetia de temporibus legerat, vel quod in evangeliis dominus prædixerat, persisteret nullo genere fieri posse ut ibi a Judæis lapis super lapidem poneretur. *Res erat in expectatione.*—Rufini Hist. Eccl. l. x. c. 37, &c.

other

other of these *causes* must be given, to account for the defeat in a common way: and yet the astonished inquirer perceived that none of these had any thing to do in it. The emperor's hatred to our holy faith kept increasing to his death: Alypius's fidelity to his master, and zeal for the old superstition, were without bounds; and the mad insolence of the Jews proved them ready to storm heaven itself to get into their old quarters. The empire, in all *other* parts, was at peace; and the only enemies it had, in *these*, were the Persians; who were too much alarmed by Julian's preparations, and too much taken up in putting their own frontiers in a condition of defence, to think of farther provoking him by new inroads into the empire.

What then would be the state of men's minds on this posture of affairs? Those who were at a distance would, in their loss for a natural cause, be attentive to what was told them of a miracle*. And those who were on the place would want no means of convincing them. For nothing was equivocal. The directors, the overseers, and the chief agents in this attempt, were all scattered and dispersed; and, surely, by no panic terror. An earthquake, that let loose a subterraneous fire, joined to a heaven all in flames, tore in sunder the foundations, destroyed the workmen, and burnt up and consumed the materials. Effects, which were all the objects of sense, and, what is more, remained so for a long time after. For many of those who survived their fellows, bore about them the lasting marks of their punishment: and, another religious revolution coming on, the site of the temple was suffered to retain that face of ravage and com-

* φήμη ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον ἦγε τὰς πόρρω διαγούσας. Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 20.

bustion,

bustion, which the escape of pent-up fires always leave behind them *.

In this account then all parties must agree. And, by what remains of antiquity, it appears they did so: A consent, not procured in the way whereby *false* reports of the like kind have sometimes procured it. For this was no trifling event, laid in a remote corner, seen but by a few prejudiced relators, and accompanied only with ambiguous circumstances: In which case, partly from contempt of a thing incredible, partly from neglect of a thing uninteresting, but principally from an indolence that shuns the trouble of examining, many a monkish tale hath made its fortune. But here, had the fact been *groundless*, or the event *different*, their falsehood must have been known to thousands: and what was so easy to be disproved, the interests of thousands would have exposed. Had the circumstances been *ambiguous*, they could not have passed uncontroverted: for This was not of the nature of the miracle said to be procured by the prayers of the *thundering legion*, which only gave testimony to the *power* of Christ, a matter about which Paganism was very indifferent: This went to the quick, and exposed the impotence and *falsehood* of their idols, a charge which always put the Gentiles out of temper. But if they were so cold in the cause of superstition as to need a spur to vindicate its honour, This they had likewise in the triumphs and exultations of the Christian ministers; who, in their sermons, their apologies, their histories, addressed both to friends and enemies, relate the event in all its

* Καὶ νῦν ἰὰν ἴλθῃς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, γυμνὰ ὄψει τὰ θεμέλια· καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ζητήσῃς, οὐθεμίαν ἀλλ' ἢ ταύτην ἀκούσεις ἢ τότε μάβδυρις ἡμεῖς πάλις· ἐφ' ἡμῶν γὰρ, ὐ πρὸ πολλῦ ταῦτα γίγονε χρόνε—Chrys. adver. Judæos, Orat. v.

circumstances;

circumstances; call upon the numerous eye-witnesses to attest the truth; appeal to the standing marks of the fact, the traces of a dreadful exterminating fire over *all* the place, and on *many* of the persons concerned; and, lastly, defy the advocates of idolatry to gainsay the exactness of their relation.

Such is the illustrious miracle we have here attempted to defend. We have examined it on the severest rules of rational assent. And we find it established on that full concurrence of happy circumstances which, we might expect, should attend a miracle so *singular* in its nature, and so important and *decisive* in its use.

But there is one circumstance almost peculiar to it, and, as it crowns all the rest, will deserve our most serious regard. It is this, that the *attempt* and the *issue* are so interwoven with one another, that they must stand or fall together. For whoever allows that Julian began to rebuild the temple, which he could not finish, must confess the obstruction came from above, because no human impediment interfered. And whoever denies the obstruction must deny the attempt, because if there were no obstruction of *that kind*, there was none at all: and if there were none at all, then there was nothing to be obstructed. That is, Julian never attempted to rebuild the Temple; an inference so furiously sceptical, as would overturn the whole body of civil history.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE ATTEMPT OF THE EMPEROR

JULIAN

TO REBUILD THE

TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK II.

HAVING now so well established the MIRACLE, we have little need to inquire into the objections that may be made to it, any further than as we may be led by our own curiosity, or inclined to gratify the curiosity of others, in seeing how far the capriciousness of wanton wit can go in its frolics towards perplexing the plainest and most evident of useful truths.

CHAP. I.

FIRST then it may be objected, "That the credit of the miracle rests entirely on the truth of this supposition, *That the holy oracles of God have declared, that the Jewish Temple should never be rebuilt:* For if this were not predicted, the restoration of it did not impeach the divine veracity; nor, consequently, was its honour concerned in frustrating the attempt.

attempt. Now the word of God no where says that the Jewish Temple *should never* be rebuilt; on the contrary, it insinuates that it *should*. It predicts, in general terms, the *total*, but not *final* destruction of the Temple; and, in express words, says, That *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles* UNTIL *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*. Which imply there was to be a period to the desolation, though the *time* be so obscurely marked as to make the fixing it uncertain."

The objection is plausible, and well deserves a solution. On which account (the method of the Discourse concurring) it was thought proper to obviate it in the very entrance on this argument: where it is shewn, from the nature of the Jewish and Christian religions, that the *total* destruction, mentioned in the Prophecies, necessarily implied a *final* one: For that, in the order of God's dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian Religions could never stand together: when *This* became established, *That* was to be done away. But while the temple remained, Judaism still existed: when That was overthrown, the religion fell with it; and consequently must rise again with the temple. But as this religion was *not* to rise while Christianity continued, the Temple was never to be restored. The consequence of all is, that, if it were restored, Christianity could no longer support its pretensions, nor the prophets nor Jesus the truth of their predictions.

CHAP. II.

SECONDLY, The testimony of Amm. Marcellinus, decisive as it is, hath been cavilled. It is suspected,

suspected, "That He is no *original* Evidence; but hath taken the account he gives us of what then passed at Jeru-salem, from the Christian writers: the work in which we find it being composed near twenty years after the event, when the *fathers* had turned what there was of the natural fact into a miracle; and, by their declamatory eloquence, had made it famous throughout the now *believing* empire."

This objection abounds with absurdities: but it is not of my invention.

It supposes Marcellinus to have taken his account from the Christian writers, because there were no other to be had: for if there were other, then the Historian's authority does not rest on their testimony; or, if it does, it rests on a good foundation, the evidence of Christian writers, supported by the Pagan. But is it likely that an unbeliever, a man of sense, and a lover of truth, should so confide in those of the new persuasion, speaking in their own cause, and unsupported by other evidence, as to deliver a fact, in terms of absolute certainty, which discredited a religion he reverenced, and a master he idolized? Could we, under these circumstances, suppose him capable of preserving the memory of so unsupported a story, we should at least look to find it delivered in such terms of doubt and suspicion as he must needs think were justly due unto it.

But the Objector * seems to have attended as little to the *situation and circumstances*, as to the *character* of the Historian. When this event happened at Jeru-salem, Ammianus was not in winter-quarters afar off in Gaul or Germany; but near at hand, in the emperor's court at Antioch, and in an office of distinction. The objector, I suppose, will allow that Julian made

* Dr. S.

the attempt. The attempt, I have shewn, was in its nature, such as must draw the attention of the whole empire upon it. Ammianus represents it as one of the most considerable enterprises of his master's reign; and that it was projected to perpetuate his memory. It miscarried. And is it possible the cause of the miscarriage could, at that time, be more a secret to him than the undertaking? Yet, if we believe the objector, the first news he heard of it was from the Christian Priests. Be it so. I ask no more, to shew the objection devoid of all common sense. A courtier of credit, a curious observer of what passed about him, hears nothing of what happened in his neighbourhood, at the time it did happen, though in an affair that engaged all men's attention. Many years after, in hunting for materials to compose his history, he starts this story. And where, I pray, does he find it! Why truly, skulking in the cover of a thorny and perplext invective, or flaunting amongst the meretricious ornaments, and on the authority, of loose and prejudiced declaimers, records it, in his *Annals*, as a fact unquestionable. Not, as was said, to derive credit to his master or his religion, but to entail eternal dishonour upon both: and all this without giving either of them the least relief; as was easy to be done by only telling from whom he had his story.

In a word, we see, the objection arises out of this circumstance, *The distance of time between the fact and the historian's account of it*. But such a circumstance can never support a conclusion of this nature, but in the case where a writer, who had an occasion to record a memorable fact at the time it happened, omits to do so; and afterwards, at the distance of many years, sticks it into his history, without any reason given for his preceding silence. But this was

not the case here: Amm. Marcellinus tells the story as soon as ever he had an opportunity of so doing; which was when he retired from business to write history. And the distance between *that* and the event is so far from taking from the credit of his relation, that, as was observed, it adds greatly to it.

For we cannot but conclude, that as a soldier and man of business, he kept a journal of every thing that passed; though we should not suppose, what is equally probable, that as a lover of letters he had very early formed his design of writing history. In what, therefore, concerned the transactions of those times, he had a sure and easy way of coming to the truth; which was by comparing his own diary with the later, and better digested, accounts of others. But indeed the *nature* of the fact, and the *quality* of the writer, shew us, there was little danger of mistake. An authentic account of this whole matter was doubtless amongst the papers of state; to all which our historian had free access. And if we should suppose his relation to be no other than a faithful abstract of Alypius's letter to Julian, we should not, I believe, be a great way from the truth. It is certain, that a prudent historian, circumstanced as Marcellinus then was, could not have acted a wiser part than to relate so nice an adventure in the very words of the person, to whose conduct it was committed: for in so doing, he found himself in that rare situation of adherence strictly to truth, without offending either of the parties who then strove for the possession of it. We may further observe, that this supposition clears up another objection which has been made to his narrative. For,

Thirdly, we are told, "that the testimony of Marcellinus does but half our business: for though he

gives a circumstantial relation of the fact, he speaks of it as a *natural*, not a *miraculous*, event."

The *former* objection, we see, supposes he had gone too far; *This*, that he hath not gone far enough. And yet I cannot understand how a professed Pagan could have said more, in conscience. This objector, sure, is not so unreasonable to expect, he should have recorded the triumphs of the Gospel over his own religion, in the words of the Christian writers, Because the other Objector had taken it into his head that he was beholden to them for his account of the story.

Thus far we may be certain: Had Ammianus thought it an artifice or imposture, he would have contrived to tell us so. For what should hinder him? Not any regard to the leaders of the Christian sect, upon whom the scandal would have fallen; for he is not backward, on every occasion, to expose their follies and perversities. On the other hand, the general character of Pagapism made him very easy not to form any distinct judgment about the matter. Had he had any such inclination, he was fairly invited to it by what he found (and therefore honestly related) of the obstinacy of the eruption, *resolutely* bent to drive them to a distance *.

After all, a faithful historian, thus circumstanced, must be sufficiently distressed.

But Ammianus's skill was great, like his honesty; and he found a way to disengage himself with honour. Other considerations apart, the fact was too notorious to be smothered, and too important to be passed

* Hocque modo clementy *destinatius* repellente, cessavit inceptum.

over;

over: at the same time, the mention of it was nice and delicate; it was like walking over those burning ruins while yet *hot with the breath* of the avenger. Two things, in it, equally required management, the *motive to the attempt*; and the *nature of the defeat*: the one affected the glory of his master; the other, the interests of his religion. See, now, his address, and how artfully he has come off! Julian gave different reasons for his project, as best suited the views he had on those to whom he told it. To the Jews he affected compassion for their sufferings, and reverence for their holy rites: To his *Priests* and *Sophists*, we may be confident, he revealed his secret purpose to be the disgrace and ruin of revelation *: And to his *courtiers* and *military* men he pretended, what was most to their humour, the fame and glory of the enterprise. Though Ammianus was certainly no dupe to his professions, yet he found it convenient, and he thought it fair, to convey that motive to posterity, which Julian had given to his corps. The *defeat* was next to be considered. To own the miracle, would be condemning his *Religion*; explicitly to deny it, would be violating his *Honour*. He avoided this dilemma, by employing the words of the original Relator: and when we see, in his account, the very language of a narrative of State, we can no more doubt that he did employ them, than that Alypius himself sent his master a relation of the whole affair.

But if the necessity of saying so much distressed his *Principles*, the necessity of saying no more crampt his *Genius*; which was bold and swelling; and prompt, on these occasions, to pour along the torrent of his eloquence. Hear how pompously he describes an

* See the note in p. 91.

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earthquake at Nicomedia.—" Eminuere Nicomediæ clades—" But the reader will find the rest below *.

He professes, we see, to tell his story *briefly* and *truly*: And I believe he did so. Yet his *brevity* does not hinder him from specifying the very day, nay even the hour when † this or that circumstance was remarked: nor his *truth* from giving us as minute a description of the various kinds of deaths as at a battle in Homer. How different is this from his relation of the event at Jerusalem! There he does not so

* " — cujus ruinarum eventum *vere breviterque* absolvam. " Primo lucis exortu *die nono kal. Septembrium*, concreti nubium " globi nigrantium, lætam paulo antè cœli speciem confuderunt: " et amandato solis splendore, nec contigua vel apposita cerne- " bantur: ita oculorum obtutu præstricto, humo involutus crassæ " caligine squalor insedit. *Dein, velut numine summo fatales con-* " *torquente manubias*, ventosque ab ipsis excitante cardinibus, " magnitudo furentium incubuit procellarum, et elisi late ris fragor; " hæc quæ secuti *typhones atque presteres*, cum horrifico tremore " terrarum, civitatem et suburbana funditus everterunt.—Interim " clamoribus variis excelsa culmina resultabant, *quærentium* " *conjugium liberosque*, et si quid necessitudinis arte constringit. " *Post horum denique secundam, multo ante tertiam*, aër jam sudus " et liquidus latentes retexit funereas strages. *Nonnulli* enim " superuentium ruderum vi nimia constrati sub ipsis interiere " penderibus. *Quidam* collo tenus aggeribus obruti, cum su- " petesse possent si qui juvissent, auxiliorum inopiâ necabantur. " *Alii* lignorum extantium acuminibus fixi pendebant. Uno ictu " cæsi *complures* paulo ante homines, tunc promiscuæ strages " cadaverum cernebantur. *Quosdam* domorum inclinata fastigia " intrinsecus terebant intactos, angore et inediâ consumendos.— " *Alii* subitâ ruinæ magnitudine oppressi iisdem adhuc mœnibus " continguntur. Collapsis *quidam* capitibus, vel humeris perfectis " aut cruribus, inter vitæ mortisque confinia, aliorum adjumenta " paria perierentium implorantes cum obtestatione magna desere- " bantur—"

† He is alike circumstantial in dating that other dreadful commotion which happened in the first consulate of Valentinian and his brother—" diem duodecimum Kal. Augustas, Consule Valen- " tiniano primum cum fratre, horrendi terrores," &c. l. xxvi. c. 10.

much

much as inform us of the *month* in which it happened; we should even have been at a loss for the *year*, but that the Persian expedition directs us, to which the form of his annals hath connected it. And so far is he from dwelling upon the slaughter that followed, the too certain consequence of eruptions of this nature, that, had it not been for the Christian writers, we might have suspected his *horrible balls of fire** had contained little more than a lambent flame, for any mischief that followed.

Again, he is not content to relate the Nicomedian earthquake, and expatiate only on its *effects*: he is as particular in describing both the *prognostics* that preceded it (such as the firmament overcast, and the day darkened with storms and tempests), and the *symptoms* that attended it (such as the lightning and whirlwind). While, on the other hand, his account of the disaster in Jerusalem is stript of all these circumstances of terror; though they be the constant forerunners and attendants of fiery eruptions; and, if we may believe the Christian writers, did actually precede and accompany this: nor have we any reason to disbelieve them, because they speak (as we shall see) of certain phænomena, the natural effects of the disordered elements, which they erroneously ascribe to a different cause.

But this is not all: Ammianus, to give us the most fearful idea of this desolation at Nicomedia, says, the conflict of nature was such, as if the God of Nature himself, armed with all the stores of heaven, was hurling his lightning over a perishing world. But we find not a line of this imagery in the affair at Jerusalem. The Deity is there kept out of sight; though the repeated eruptions, which, he says, seemed

* Metuendi globi flammarum.

obstinately and resolutely bent to drive the workmen to a distance, drove him to the confines of superior agency. But he was unwilling, and for a good reason, to call his readers after him.

What could occasion a conduct so different in a case so similar? Had he related the one as a noted fact, and the other but as an uncertain rumour, something might be pretended. But this makes the difficulty, he tells them both as facts, and facts of equal notoriety and truth. A difficulty nothing can solve but what we have already shewn to be the case, the bashfulness of a backward evidence.

In this light we see, that his relating the eruption of Jerusalem as a natural event, takes nothing from the reality of the divine interposition. When a Pagan bears testimony to a fact of this importance, we may be as sure it is a *miracle* as, when a Papist bears testimony to a miracle of no importance at all, we are sure it is a *trick*.

But his *reserve* is so far from depriving us of the benefit of his testimony, that it is that which supports it. Had we found a Pagan speaking like a Christian Father on this occasion, his evidence had soon become as suspected as that of the Jewish historian, where he speaks of *Christ*; which one of the ablest and most candid of his critics has fairly condemned for an imposture; and another equally respectable, who would fain bolster up its credit, frankly owns, could never come from him in the condition it is brought down to us. This miracle, without question, embarrassed Marcellinus no less than the WORKER of miracles distressed the other Historian: whose case the excellent Writer, just now mentioned, has well described. But had posterity made equally free with both, I should have despaired of disengaging my

my Author with the address and abilities he has served Josephus *.

In a word, all we want of our adversaries is to have the fact acknowledged as Ammianus relates it. Its nature depends neither on his, nor on their, nor on our opinion of the matter, but on the nature of things. We think, indeed, that it speaks itself. But, for the sake of those who think otherwise, I propose, in the course of this examination, to shew, that it was an effect, which no power but that of the moral Governor of the universe was able to produce.

I proceed, then, in my subject; to which these cavils are only the prelude.

CHAP. III.

THE next objection to the fact arises from what, one would have hoped, should have been the chief support of it, THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS. But their credit amongst fashionable letters is now so low, that if they do not dishonour the cause they appear in, it is all we are to expect from them. For, as a late writer † graciously allows us to believe every strange thing except a MIRACLE, so, to say the truth, we are apt enough to credit every strange relator of antiquity, so he be not a FATHER. And yet, it is very certain, the *fathers* were, at worst,

* See Mr. Forster's Discourse, intitled, "A Dissertation upon the account supposed to have been given of Jesus Christ by Josephus, &c. Oxon. MDCCXLIX."

† In a book, intitled, "Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding," printed 1748, p. 199.

no more prejudiced in favour of Religion, than their Pagan neighbours were prejudiced against it. And whether these were philosophers, sophists, or statesmen, if we read their works, we shall find that very credulity, prejudice, false reasoning, and ill faith, which these objectors pretend has been discovered in some of the most celebrated of the *fathers*.

But what is it They have done, in the point in question, which proves so injurious to their own cause? "Why, it seems, they differ greatly from Ammianus, in their relation of this extraordinary fact; by adding many circumstances to his; some of which are utterly incredible."

Whether it were the *Fathers*, or their *Cause*, which render their accounts incredible, will be seen in due time. At present let me observe, it greatly eases their defence, that it cannot be fairly pretended, that the Christian writers contradict the relation of Ammianus, in any the least particular.

In the Second place, What I said before, of Marcellinus's substractions, I here repeat of the *Fathers' additions*; that they are so far from invalidating the fact, that they add greatly to its support. We have shewn Marcellinus to be an unwilling Evidence, who hath cautiously avoided saying more than was just necessary to save harmless his character of a faithful historian. It was natural then to expect he had studiously omitted such circumstances as made most for the honour of that cause to which he was neither a friend nor favourer.

Thirdly, Admitting it was as is pretended, that incredible things are to be found in their relations; this circumstance will scarce be deemed sufficient to

to overthrow a well-attested fact, by any who consider that such as are best established have never been exempt from these injurious pollutions. The miracles of *Christ* and his apostles have not escaped the adulterations of heretics. And if this were sufficient to discredit truth, there is not a fact in civil history that would stand its ground. As to those who expect a certain innate virtue in Truth, of force to extrude all heterogeneous mixture, they expect a quality which was never yet found in it, nor, I fear, ever will. Nay, the more notorious a fact of this kind is, that is to say, the more eye-witnesses there are of it, the more subject it is to undesigned depravation; as there must be, amongst a large cloud of evidence, some men of heated fancies: and the greater the communication, and the frequenter the collision, of these warm heads, the more active and inflamed will be the creative faculty of the mind; which, in that state, we find, has always been the seminary of false circumstances of the prodigious kind.

But we should grant a great deal too much in allowing this to be the case here. Providence did not do its work by halves; nor was penurious in the grace so seasonably bestowed upon the suffering church. For, what, we have shewn, was performed in the sight of all men, we shall see, was faithfully commemorated by the most celebrated preachers and apologists of *that* age; and as soberly and carefully recorded by the best historians of the *following*. And if, travelling downwards in a blind and heavy road, it contracted some stains of the soil through which it passed, it was never so disfigured as to have those dirty features mistaken for its natural countenance, by any the least attentive observer.

The

The Christian Evidence for the fact are GREGORY NAZIANZEN, AMBROSE, and CHRYSOSTOM. These lived at the time it happened. The next age produced RUFINUS, SOCRATES, SOZOMEN, and THEODORET, whose testimony is perfectly consistent one with the other. In the last place are PHILOSTORGIUS, THEOPHANES, OROSIUS, NICEPHORUS, ZONARAS, and CEDRENUS, who, although distant and different in age, are so near allied in judgment, that they are here put together; not to add credit to the cause they serve; but, by separating them from their several contemporaries of a better paste and compound, to bear alone the shame of their proper folly or prevarication.

The original evidence, as we said, are Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen. Of these, Ambrose lived far in the West; and having, as may be supposed, received only a general relation of the fact, he delivers it as generally, *Have you not heard* (says he, writing to the emperor Theodosius) *how when Julian gave command to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, the workmen were destroyed by a* FIRE *sent from God*?*

In

* This is an epistle to the Emperor, written on a very singular occasion—A certain bishop had excited his flock to burn a Jewish synagogue: which being complained of to Theodosius, he ordered the offenders to be punished; and that the bishop should rebuild it at his own expence. The impiety of this sentence was so offensive to Ambrose, that, having reminded the Emperor of the fate of the Jewish Temple, he asks him, whether he does not expect the same dishonours should attend his command, which followed the attempt of Julian. "Non audisti, "Imperator, quia cum jussisset Julianus reparari Templum "Hierosolymis, quod divino qui faciebant repagulum igne fla- "grarunt? Non cavés ne etiam nunc fiat? Adeo a te non "fuit jubendum ut Julianus hoc juserit." Ep. xl. It was well this

In which may be discerned the different fortune that naturally attends *truth* and *falsehood*. A fable, the further it goes, the more it gathers: for, like all untimely productions, coming out, at first, rude and unformed, it leaves room for charitable invention to give it shape; which, by general contribution, soon raises it to a bulk that looks considerable. Whereas the circumstances of a true story drop off, one after another, as it advances in its progress, till it becomes stript, and contracted to its essence: for there being precision in the testimony of the evidence, and conviction in the nature of the fact, men, on its first appearance, are less solicitous, as they have less need, to support it by its circumstances, than to convey it by its essentials.

Chrysostom, indeed, was in the neighbourhood of the place. But, speaking to an audience as well instructed in the affair as himself, though he had frequent occasion to put them in mind of so distinguishing

this miracle was performed by God, to do honour to himself: Had it been to do honour to the bishops of his church, we see how little they deserved it! Here is one who violates the civil peace, and invades the religious rights of his neighbour; and another who supports him in so doing, on the authority of the miracle at Jerusalem. In which they either foully prevaricate; or grossly mistake the purpose of God's interposition. They represent it as intended for an example to the magistrate to restrain the Jews from all exercise of their superstition; when it was evidently for no other purpose than to support the truth of the divine predictions concerning the ruin of a certain temple. Theodosius was to expect the fate of Julian. And why? Because he was *supporting* those very rights of nature which Julian then *violated*. For the attempt to rebuild the temple was but one of the many arts he employed to extirpate the Christian Faith by violence. But it has always been the trick, and has often proved the defeat, of Intolerance, to place their miserable Principle on such foundations as are found most of all to discredit it.

tinguishing a mercy, yet always dwells in generals; just as he would have done in referring to the crucifixion, or to any other the most known incident in the Gospel. Thus, in his *Discourse against the Jews and Gentiles*, speaking of the desolate condition of the *temple*, he says—" For in our times that monarch, " who exceeded all men in his malice to our holy " faith, both lent the aid of the Imperial authority, " and became an associate in the design. They " began the work, but could make no progress; " for a FIRE, bursting from the foundations, drove " away, and dispersed all concerned in the under- " taking*."

The only contemporary *father*, therefore, from whom we can expect a detailed history of the event, is Gregory Nazianzen. For he, not living at a distance, like Ambrose; nor preaching, like Chrysostom, to those who knew every circumstance, but residing in these quarters, and writing in defence of our holy faith, against Julian, in an appeal to the Roman Empire, was both qualified by his knowledge, and called upon by the nature of his performance, to be particular in his relation of the fact.

Now, as his account must undergo a severe scrutiny, it will be but fair to give it in his own words. Speaking then of Julian, he says,

" After having run through a course of every " other tyrannical experiment against the Faith, and, " upon trial, despising all of them as trifling and " contemptible, he, at last, brought down the whole " body of the Jews upon us; whom, for their ancient

* —καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς ἡμετέρας ὁ πάντας εἰς ἀσέβειαν νικήσας βασιλεὺς, καὶ ἔδωκεν εἰσουσίαν τότε συνέπραξε, καὶ τοῦ ἔργου ἐφάνθω. καὶ οὐδὲ μικρὸν προσελθεῖν ἠδυνήθησαν, ἀλλὰ πῦρ ἀπὸ τῶν θεμελίων ἐκπηδῆσαν πάντας αὐτοῖς ἀπήλασεν. Adversus Judæos et Gentiles, tom. i.

" turn

" turn to seditious novelties, and an inveterate hatred " of the Christian name, he chose as the fittest " instruments of his machinations. These, under a " shew of great good will, which hid his secret pur- " pose, he endeavoured to convince, from their sacred " books and traditions, which he took upon him " to interpret *, that now was come the time fore- " told, when they should return to their own *Land*, " rebuild their *temple*, and restore the *law* to its " ancient force and splendor. When these things " had been thoroughly insinuated, and heartily en- " tertained (for deceit finds easy admittance when it " flatters our passions), the Jews set upon the work " of rebuilding with great attention, and pushed on " the project with the utmost labour and application. " But when now driven from their work by a violent " whirlwind and a sudden earthquake, they fled to- " gether for refuge to a certain neighbouring church " (some to deprecate the impending mischief; others, " as is natural in such cases, to catch at any help " that presents itself; and others, again, inveloped " in the crowd, were carried along with the body " of flyers): there are who say, the church refused " them entrance; and that when they came to the " doors, which were wide open but a moment be- " fore, they found them, on a sudden, closed by " a secret and invisible hand; a hand accustomed " to work these wonders for the terror and confusion " of the impious, and for the security and comfort " of godly men. This however is now invariably " affirmed and believed by all, That as they strove " to force their way in by violence, the FIRE, " which burst from the foundations of the *temple*,

* I think Gregory uses the word ἐπῳδάζω ironically, in the sense of pretending to interpret with a prophetic spirit.

" met

" met and stopt them, and one part it burnt and
" destroyed; and another it desperately maimed,
" leaving them a living monument of God's commi-
" nation and wrath against sinners. Thus the affair
" passed; and let no man continue incredulous con-
" cerning this, or the other miraculous works of God.
" But still the thing most wonderful and illustrious
" was a light, which appeared in the heavens, of
" a Cross within a Circle. That name and figure,
" which impious men before esteemed so dishonour-
" able upon earth, was now raised on high, and
" equally objected to the common view of all men;
" advanced by God himself, as the trophy of his
" victory over unbelievers; of all trophies the most
" exalted and sublime. Nay further, they who were
" present, and partakers of the miracle we are now
" about to speak of, shew, to this very day, the
" sign or figure of the cross which was then marked
" or impressed upon their garments. For, at that
" time, as these men (whether such as were of us,
" or strangers) were shewing these marks, or at-
" tending to others who shewed them, each presently
" observed the wonder, either on himself or his
" neighbour: having a radiant mark on his body or
" on his garment: in which there was something
" that, in art and elegance, exceeded all painting
" or embroidery *."

This

* —ἐπεὶ δὲ πάμπολλα διεξιέναι τάλλα, καὶ σὺν ἴδῃ τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν τυραννίδος, ὡς μικρόν τι καὶ ἀγεννὲς ἀτιμάσας τῶν ἐκφήνας καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων φῦλον ἡμῖν, τὸν σωφρονίσαι τε αὐτὸν ἐπιβολὴν καὶ τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν ἄνωθεν ἐπισυμβὰν μῖσος ζωηρὸν λαβὸν τὸ τεκμήριον, ἐπιδείξει τε δῆλον ἐκ τῶν καθ' αὐτοὺς βιβλίων καὶ ἀπορήτων, ὃς τὸν αὐτοῦ ἀποχειρήσαντα εἰς καλλιθεῖς εἰς τὸν ταφῶνα, καὶ σὺν ἡμῖν ἀναδιμασθαι, καὶ τῶν σαφῶν τὸ κράτος ἀναπεισασθαι καὶ ἀποκρυβόμενος ἐσθῆτας πλάσματα τὴν ἐπίνοιαν, ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ διεκθεῖν, καὶ ἔπεισεν ἐύκολον γὰρ εἰς ἀπάντα τὸ σφῶν ἀδοὺν ἅπαν, οἱ μὲν ὡς ἀναστησόμενος ἀπεστάλη τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ χριστὸ πολλῷ, καὶ

This is the only contemporary writer amongst the Christians who delivers the account of the miracle *differently* from Ammianus Marcellinus, that is, with *additional* circumstances. Let us see then what handle *he* hath given to the objector.

But before we come to examine what he *really* affirms, and takes upon his credit to support; it will be proper to set in a true light what he is only *supposed* to affirm, and what he does not undertake to warrant.

He tells us, it was reported, that *those who fled for refuge to an adjoining church, whose doors were wide open but a moment before, found them suddenly closed by an invisible power.*—And, without question, They who could not then get in, did believe the impediment to be miraculous. They did not consider, that a frighted crowd, all pressing to be foremost, would soon choke

καὶ προθυμίᾳ περὶ τὸ ἔργον ἰταλαιπώρουν—ὡς δὲ ὑπὸ ἀΐδρίας λαίλαπος, καὶ βρασμῷ γῆς ἄφνω ζυνιλαβίδες ἐπί τι τῶν πλησίον ἱερῶν, οἱ μὲν ὡς ἐκδιώξουσις ὥρμησαν. οἱ δὲ, ὅπερ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις φίλει ζυμβαίνειν, τῷ παρόντι χρώμενοι πρὸς βοήθειαν, οἱ δὲ ἄλλως παραχθῆ ζυμφερόμενοι, καὶ τοῖς θύραις ζυνεισπίπτουσιν· εἰσὶ μὲν οὖ λέγουσιν, ὡς ὑδὲ τὸ ἱερὸν αὐτὸς προσεδέξατο, ἀλλ' ἀναπεπταμέναις προσελθόντες ταῖς πύλαις, ἐπιθυμήσαντες ἐντυχεῖν ἔκ τινος ὁράτου καὶ ἀφανοῦς δυνάμεως, ἣ τὰ τοιαῦτα τεράστια πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀσεβῶν καλάπληξιν, καὶ τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἀσφάλειαν. ὃ δὲ ἄπαντες ἤδη καὶ λέγουσι πιστεύουσιν, ὅτι βιαζομένης αὐτὸς καὶ φιλονικούσης περὶ τὴν εἴσοδον, πῦρ ἔκστησιν ἀπαυθῆσαν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ τοὺς μὲν καθοπλίσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι—τοὺς δὲ τῶν καιρίων ἀκροθηνιάσας, σχεῖν ἀφῆκεν ἡμιψύχους τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν ἀπειλῆς καὶ κινήσεως. τοῦτο μὲν δὴ τοιοῦτο, καὶ ἀπιστεῖτο μηδείς, ἔτι μηδὲ ταῖς ἄλλαις τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσι. Ὃ δὲ ἔτι παραδοξότερον καὶ περιφανέστερον, ἔστη φῶς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ τοῦ Σταυροῦ περίγραφον, καὶ τὸ πρότερον ἐπὶ γῆς ἀτιμαζόμενον τοῖς ἀθέοις, καὶ σχῆμα καὶ ὄνομα ἔσχε ἐν οὐρανῷ δόκιμον παρὰ πᾶσιν ἐπίσης. καὶ γίνεται τρόπαιον τῷ θεῷ τῆς κατὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν νίκης, τροπαιοῦχος παιδὸς ὑψηλότερος—ἐπιδεδράκασιν ἔτι καὶ νῦν τὰς ἐσθῆτας, οἱ τὸ θαῦμα ἐκεῖνο θεαταὶ καὶ μύσται, τὰς τότε καλασκιασθείσας τοῖς τοῦ σταυροῦ τίμασιν. ὁμοῦ τε γὰρ ταῦτα διηγεῖτό τις [εἴτ' ὢν τῶν ἡμεδαπῶν, εἴτ' ὢν τῶν ξένων] ἢ διηγεμένων ἤκουε καὶ τὸ θαῦμα ἴσχυε παρ' ἑκάστῳ, ἢ τῷ πλησίον γινόμενοι καλάστρεφε. ὧν, ἢ ἑκάστου ἐμοῦ τοιοῦτον ἐν τοῖς ἐσθήμασι, φάσης ἐσαρκῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ περιεργοτέρας ζωγραφίας ποικιλώτερον ἐν τούτῳ τί γίνεται. Orat. iv. adv. Jul.

choke up a wider passage than the door of a little oratory, like this where they sought for refuge, had the doors been still *open*. But he tells us they were suddenly *closed:* and, if they opened outward, the *power* that shut them could be only *invisible* to a blind crowd, half frighted out of their wits. And, indeed, Gregory himself intimates, in the following words (where he speaks of the fiery eruption) that this was not the general opinion; and particularly not his own; for he insinuates what he deemed to be the true cause of the impediment, in telling us *they strove to force their way in by violence*. But (adds he) that which followed, namely, the eruption, *is now invariably affirmed and believed by all*. As much as to say, time and cool examination, which corrected the first reports, have left the miraculous circumstance of the *impediment* doubtful; but have put that of the *eruption* out of all question.

This being premised, we come to the circumstances additional to the account of Marcellinus. Gregory mentions three: 1. *A whirlwind and earthquake*. 2. *The light which appeared in the heavens of a cross within a circle*; and, 3. *The figure of a cross on the bodies and garments of the workmen and assistants*. These, indeed, Gregory delivers as unquestioned facts, doubted or contradicted by none: and of so trite and frequent mention in the divines and historians of this time, that it is observable he tells the main fact, the *fiery eruption*, not directly or absolutely, but only obliquely and occasionally, for the sake of a circumstance not so generally known. Of all these, therefore, it will be incumbent on us to give some good account. I shall try them on the test of Ammianus's relation, as that is made (though only for this purpose) the standard of the truth; and doubt not but they will be *all* found very credible, notwithstanding

withstanding their different degrees of evidence; the first, the whirlwind and earthquake, being *necessarily* connected with the eruption recorded by Ammianus; the second, the cross in the heavens, a *likely* attendant on the then unquiet state of the elements: and the third, the cross on the garments, very *consonant* to what we know of meteorology.

1. First then, as to the *earthquake*. Natural history informs us, that fiery eruptions, of which it makes frequent mention, are always preceded by an *earthquake*. And, indeed, the obvious nature of the thing instructs us, it can hardly be otherwise; the force of fire making its way through a heavy load, opposed to its explosion, cannot but throw the incumbent earth into convulsive struggles, during the agitation. And this tumult in the *inferior* elements must needs communicate itself to the adjoining parts of the *superior*. Hence it hath so generally happened, that the disorder below has been accompanied with the like above; such as fierce *whirlwinds* and a troubled sky: this was the first signal of the like dreadful conflict in the desolation at Nicomedia, as Ammianus himself relates it—"Concreti nubium globi nigrantium, lætum paullo "ante cœli speciem confuderunt, ventosque ab ipsis "excitante cardinibus," &c. Thus far, therefore, Gregory's account is not only agreeable to the usual course of things, in their unquiet state, but the appearances are told in their order; the *whirlwind*, the *earthquake*, and the *fire*.

2. *The light which was seen in the heavens of a cross within a circle*, is the second thing we are to speak to. Of this kind of phænomenon, the *ecclesiastical*, the *civil*, and the *natural* history, both of ancient and modern ages, affords us so many instances, that it will

give us very little trouble. Not to keep the Reader in suspense, it was neither more nor less than one of those meteoric lights, in a still and clouded sky, which are not unfrequently seen in solar or lunar halos: And when the parhelia, and paraselenes, which sometimes attend them, are added to that appearance, we can easily conceive how greatly the pomp of them must be increased. To support this account, we may observe, that this celestial cross was not seen till the conflict in the sky was over; it being the night after the storm, and the night after that, as Theodoret * informs us; where, by the way, we may observe, this was a lunar halo.

It was the same appearance, from whence (as Eusebius and others tell us) Constantine the Great drew the happy presage of an approaching victory: it was the same which Cyril of Jerusalem saw over that city, in the time of his son Constantius; to whom the good bishop sent the news, and, indeed, endeavoured to make the most of it. The historians of the middle ages have, at different times, occasionally mentioned the like appearances; and, generally, mentioned them as miraculous. Since the revival of learning, the Naturalists and astronomers have taken notice of such as happened in their times; and have attempted to explain their physical causes.

But here I find what I had farther to say, on this subject, already done to my hands, in a very ingenious and learned discourse † of the excellent J. A. Fabricius: to which, with much satisfaction, I refer the Reader;

* — κατὰ δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν νύκτα καὶ αὖ πάλιν τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ, ὤφθη ἐν τῷ ἀέρι τὸ σωτήριον σημεῖον τὸ σκηνὰς φιλοσοφίας. Eccl. Hist. l. iii. c. 20.

† Intit. "Exercitatio critica, qua disputatur, Crucem, quam "in cœlis vidisse se juravit Constantinus imp. fuisse phænomenon "naturale in halone solari." Vid. Bib. Græc. vol. vi.

For

For it is not my way to repeat what others have proved before me; or to defraud them of the praises due to their discoveries.

I will only make one observation. All these meteoric crosses are represented as being encompassed by a luminous circle. A circumstance, which, if but commonly attended to, would have betrayed their original. But so far from that, the *circle* was brought as a convincing argument of their being miraculous. With this, Gregory triumphs * over the mathematicians or astrologers; and defies them to account for it by their rules of art. Would the reader know the ground of so gross a delusion? It was no more than this, the *circle* was so established an emblem of victory, that, like one of Epicurus's *Simulacra* (the exuviæ of *bodies*, as these of *minds*), they regarded it as the *moral phantom* that proclaimed Julian's defeat. For figure and rhetoric had, in most times, but especially in those, been an overmatch for reason and science.

3. But the last circumstance (says the objectors) so far exceeds all the common length of credulity, that its invention must have put fancy to the stretch, and even fraud itself to the blush: and this is, the *mark of the cross impressed upon the bodies, or garments*, of the people present.

As extraordinary as this may seem, I do not despair of regaining those whom it hath most revolted.

But first it will be necessary to call in a writer of the next class, and consider his words—"When there-"fore (says Socrates) a vast number were assembled "on the place, another prodigy happened; for a FIRE "FELL FROM HEAVEN, which consumed all the work-

* Πῦ σὺ τοῦτον ἔχεις τὸν ΚΥΚΛΟΝ ἐν τοῖς σοῖς μαθήμασι; Οὗτος Χριστοῦ ΝΙΚΗΣ ὁ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ. Orat. iv.

"men's tools*." As this historian is the only writer who explicitly † mentions *lightning*, and its effects; it will be proper to consider its credibility. Under the last head we have shewn, how a fiery eruption must occasion a previous earthquake; and this earthquake, a stormy sky. But air, put into a violent motion, always produces *lightning*, when it abounds with matter susceptible of inflammation. And those columns of air, which lie over places that labour with convulsive throes to cast out an enkindled matter from its entrails, must needs be impregnated with vast quantities of sulphureous particles, which the earth, in that condition, exsudes from its pores, and which the solar heat draws upwards. But the natural history of these eruptions supports this reasoning. And Ammianus, whose evidence we have so often appealed to, gives us an example of it in the before cited case of the *earthquake* at Nicomedia, attended, as appears by his account, with a fiery eruption, like *that* at Jerusalem. Now this historian tells us, that there, the earthquake was preceded by *lightning*, as well as storms—"Concreti "nubium globi nigrantium, lætam paullo ante cœli "speciem confuderunt—Dein velut numine summo "*fatales contorquente manubias* ventosque ab ipsis "excitante cardinibus, &c.—hæcque secuti typhones "atque presteres, cum horrifico *tremore terrarum*." The same, he affirms of that more dreadful earthquake which happened in the first consulate of Valentinian and his brother: "Paulo post lucis exortum, densitate

* Παρόντων ἐν σφόδρα πολλῶν, ἔτερον τεράστιον ἐπιγίνεται. πῦρ γὰρ ἐξ ὑπάτου καταστῆψαι, πάντα τὰ τῶν οἰκοδομῶν ἐργαλεῖα διέφθειρεν. Soc. L. iii. c. 20.

† Philostorgius, by the mode of his expression and by the order in which he puts things, seems as if he meant this fire, in the following words; τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ, πῦρ ἐπιγίνεται τῆς ἐργάζεσθαι τελεύντας, τοῦτο δὲ, σεισμὸς ἐχόμενον. Ex. Lib. vii. c. 9.

"prævia

" prævia fulgurum acrius vibratorum tremefacta con-
" cutitur omnis terreni stabilitas ponderis *."—

Lightning therefore, we see, is one of the constant concomitants in this desolation.

Now lightning is formed by the ferment and explosion of sulphureous and bituminous exhalations from the earth, mixing with nitrous acids in the air. And as this mixture, or combination, is variously proportioned, according to the then casual concourse of elementary particles, so its destructive effects are various. Sometimes it hath been known to scorch up the cloaths without penetrating the body; and, sometimes again, to break all the bones without discolouring the flesh or cloaths; nay, even to melt the sword without injuring the scabbard. In the *first* case we must conclude, the sulphur predominated; in the *latter*, the salts. And according to *this* proportion, the lightning in question seems to have been formed. For, they tell us, it melted the iron instruments, but hurt neither the cloaths nor flesh; on which it affixed a cross, without any sensible notice at the time of the impression. For I make no scruple to affirm, that this mark was the natural effect of lightning, so constituted.

That lightning falls in regular figures, hath been frequently observed. The most unlikely, one should think, is the circular; and yet, in that, it hath been commonly known to fall: the most likely is the angular, (and a *cross* is but two straight lines meeting at right angles); yet this, though not very rare, has been less common.

But, it will be said, " the fathers make it a matter of much more importance; and the fantastic things they tell of these *crosses* exclude both nature and sober miracle; and admit of no other cause but fraud or fanaticism; even though we should substract from the

* L. xxvi. c. 10.

account the contradictions that arise from their joint testimony. Gregory * and Socrates † say these crosses were *shining* and *radiated:* but Theodoret ‡ tells us, they were not bright and shining, but shaded with a dark colour: again, Rufinus and Socrates affirm, they were by no means to be washed out §."

All this, it must be owned, hath the rank air of inventive prodigy. Yet view it well, and you see nature breaking in upon you. In a word, the fathers could have said nothing more corroborative of our account; which reduces them to a natural phænomenon: for the qualities they give to these crosses, not only shew them to be *meteoric*, but inform us of their very *specific* nature; which was precisely that of the PHOSPHORUS.

They shone by night, and were dark, and smokey-coloured by day (for thus, the different accounts of their appearance, given us by Gregory and Theodoret, are plainly to be reconciled, by the testimony of Rufinus ‖) the very property both of natural and artificial Phosphori. Of the *first* kind, are insects, rotten-wood, shell-fish, tainted flesh **, scales, feathers, of certain animals, &c. Of the *latter*, that solid body, in particular, made from urine (for almost all bodies

* Κατάστερος.

† Τῇ ἐχομένῃ νυκτὶ, σφραγῖδες σαυρῷ ἀκτινοειδεῖς.

‡ Οὐκ ἔτι μέλλοι φωσφόροι, ἀλλ' ἐκ μελαίνης καλασκευασμένων χροιᾶς. L. iii. c. 20.

§ Ut etiam qui diluere pro sui infidelitate voluisset, nullo genere valeret abolere. Ruf.—— ἀποπλύνειν κ᾽ ἀποσμήχειν θέλοντες, ὁδενὶ τρόπῳ ἠδύνατο. Socr.

‖ In sequenti nocte in vestimentis omnium signaculum crucis ita evidens apparuit. Hist. Eccl. l. x. c. 37.

** Hossein the son of Ali, and grandson of Mahomet, was killed in aspiring to the throne in the Caliphate of Yezid. His head was cut off and carried by a soldier to the governor of Coussah; as it lay on a table in the night the wife of the soldier pretended that a lambent flame played about the head, which might very well be. But this by the Partisans of Ali was esteemed a great miracle.

will

will afford it) with which, if one writes, as with a pencil on paper, the letters, in the night, will appear like flame, and, in the day time, present only a dim, smokey suffusion.

The reader will be further confirmed in this opinion, if he considers of what the *artificial phosphorus* is composed; which is chiefly a fixed salt, obtained by a long process by fire; in the course of which much of this element seems to be imbibed: so as to give the minute parts of the phosphorus the proper motion and agitation to produce light. Now the salts were predominant in the lightning in question, as appears by its violent effects on metals, and its innocuous contact with softer bodies. And we can easily conceive how that high ferment, by which lightning is formed, may produce a *natural* phosphorus, in the same manner as a long process by fire makes the *artificial*.

This will account too for the difficulty in washing out the marks. Those on the bodies would sooner disappear; those on the habits more slowly. And it is observable, that, though Gregory tells us, the curious yet produced (when he wrote) the marks on the garments; he says nothing of those on the bodies.

And now, I presume, the candid reader may be disposed to abate his wonder, and inclined to give the *fathers* credit for the facts, how much soever they might be mistaken in the immediate cause of them: and the unbeliever, from the fate of so *promising an objection*, may be taught the use of modesty and diffidence, when he opposes his own reason to the truths that establish Revelation.

But, to put the matter farther out of doubt, I shall produce a passage from the Adversaria of the famous Isaac Casaubon, written while in England, and, as his son Meric conjectures (to whom we are indebted for

for it) about the year 1610-11. It follows in these words: "This day the Lord Bishop of Ely *, a prelate "of great piety and holiness, related to me a wonderful thing. He said he had received the account "from many hands, but chiefly from the Lord Bishop "of Wells, lately dead †, who was succeeded by "Bishop Montague; that in the *city of Wells*, about "fifteen years ago ‡, one summer's day, while the "people were at divine service in the cathedral "church, they heard, as it thundered, two or three "claps above measure dreadful, so that the whole "congregation, affected alike, threw themselves on "their knees at this terrifying sound. It appeared, "the lightning fell at the same time, but without harm "to any one. So far, then, there was nothing but "what is common in the like cases. The wonderful "part was this, which afterwards was taken notice of "by many, that the marks of a CROSS were found to "have been imprinted on the bodies of those who "were then at divine service in the cathedral. The "Bishop of Wells told my Lord of Ely, that his wife "(a woman of uncommon probity) came to him, "and informed him, as of a great *miracle*, that she "had then the mark of a *cross* impressed upon her "body. Which tale when the Bishop treated as

* Doctor Lanc. Andrews, afterwards Bishop of Winchester.

† Dr. John Still.

‡ The following note was communicated by a learned friend. R. W.

"Hoc etiam anno [1596], in agro Somersettensi, urbeculæ "episcopalis, cui a fontibus Velles [Wells] nomen, templum — "die dominico, magnâ plebis frequentiâ, fulmine concussum, & "ardere visum; ingenti populi consternatione, planctu & lamentatione; flamma undique circumvolitans omnem multitudinem "circumplexa est, majore formidine quàm damno, quippe vestes "& capilli ambusti, intactis corporibus." Rob. Johnston, Rerum Britannicarum Historia, L. vii. p. 223.

"absurd,

"absurd, his wife exposed the part, and gave him "ocular proof. He afterwards observed, that he had "upon himself, on his arm (as I take it) the plainest "mark of a ✠. Others had it on the shoulder, the "breast, the back, or other parts. This account "that great man, my Lord of Ely, gave me in such "a manner, as forbade me even to doubt of its "truth*."

Here, then, we have the very same event, happening from the same cause, the *burst of lightning*. The only difference is, that *here* the *cross* appeared upon the bodies only: *there* both on the cloaths and bodies. A difference which the more or less subtilty of the meteoric matter would occasion.

The fact, we find, is as well attested as a fact can possibly be. A bishop, of the greatest name in his

* Rem miram mihi narrabat hodie Dom. Episcopus Eliensis, sanctæ pietatis Antistes. Dicebat se accepisse à multis, sed præcipue à Dom. Episcopo Vellensi nuper mortuo, cui successit Dom. Montacutus: evenisse ante annos circiter xv, in urbe Wella, sive eu dicenda, Valla, die quadam æstiva, ut, dum in Ecclesiâ Cathedrali populus sacris vacubat, duo vel tria tonitrua inter plura audirentur, supra modum horrenda, ita ut populus universus in genua μιᾷ ὁρμῇ procumberet ad illum sonum terribilem. Constitit fulmen simul cecidisse, sine cujusquam damno tamen. Atque hæc vulgaria. Illud admirandum, quod postea est observatum à multis, repertas esse crucis imagines impressas corporibus eorum, qui in æde sacra tum fuerant. Dicebat Episcopus Vallensis D. Eliensi, uxorem suam (honestissima ea fœmina fuit) venisse ad se, et ei narrasse pro grandi miraculo sibi in corpore impressa ✠ signa extare; quod cum risu exciperet Episcopus, uxor, nudato corpore, ei probavit verum esse quod dixerat. Deinde ipse observavit sibi quoque ejusdem ✠ manifestissimam imaginem impressam esse, in brachio, opinor: aliis in humero, in pectore, in dorso, aut alia corporis parte. Hoc vir maximus, Dom. Eliensis, ita mihi narrabat, ut vetaret de veritate historiæ ambigere. Ex. Advers. Is. Casaubon. apud Mer. Casaubon. in tract. intit. *Of Credulity and Incredulity*, p. 118.

time

time for virtue and knowledge, receives it from an eye-witness, and a party concerned, a bishop likewise of an irreproachable character, and tells it to a man whose candid honesty and well-digested learning had rendered him one of the greatest ornaments of the age in which he lived. This account his son, a man of learning likewise, and of approved integrity, finds under his father's own hand, in his Adversaria, and gives it to the world; with this additional information, that he, the son, who had been beneficed in Somersetshire, had never heard the fact disputed, but had frequently met with several who pretended to a perfect knowledge of it.

To this let me add, that religion was out of the question. Here was no church, or churchman, no sect or doctrine, to be confuted or established, by the attestation of a prodigy. The great critic speaks of it as a physical, though a wonderful event. The very bishops deliver it to one another, and to him, as only an escape of nature. The bishop's wife indeed, at first, seemed a little planet-struck with superstition; and while she thought herself only distinguished with this badge of sanctity, was very willing it should pass for a *miracle*. But the honest bishop laughed her out of this conceit: and when she found how small a part of the honour was likely to fall to her share, she seemed content to submit it to her husband's better judgment.

Now, as religion and religious purposes had nothing to do in this wonder, that extraordinary philosopher *, once before quoted, will permit us to give it credit.

It is indeed so well proved, as to bear much weightier observations than any I have to lay upon it: what I have to say being only this, 1. That the two or three

* The author of Philosophical Essays, &c.

dreadful

dreadful explosions perfectly agree with what hath been observed of the componency of that lightning which produces such an effect; namely, that it abounded with nitrous and fixed salts. 2. The relation says, it was some time after that the crosses were found upon the bodies of the patients; and that the bishop observed one upon himself on talking with his wife about it. This may give light to a passage in Gregory, which has the air of mystery, and yet amounts to no more than what the simpler and less sublime pen of this modern critic explains. The words of Gregory are these: *As they were shewing these marks, or attending to others who shewed them, each presently observed the wonder, either on himself or his neighbour; a radiant mark on his body or his garment.*

But suppose it should be said, "That the circumstance of *lightning*, on which we pretend to explain this phænomenon, is not sufficiently established; as it is mentioned but by one historian; and only in two words; and by the general name of a *fire* from *Heaven*." Whoever says it, will gain little, if his design be to invalidate the circumstance; and yet less, if he thinks that the discredit of that circumstance will deprive us of the means of accounting for the *crosses*. For it appears, from the nature of things already explained, that a *fire* from *beneath* might produce this effect as naturally as a *fire* from *above*. And by a relation, as well attested and notorious as the fact preserved in Casaubon, we have a famous instance of its having actually produced it. The excellent Mr. BOYLE, in his *discourse of some unheeded causes of the insalubrity and salubrity of the air*, gives us the following history from Kircher and others:—"And that the subterraneal effluvia may

"produce

" produce effects, and therefore probably be of na-
" tures very uncommon, irregular, and, if I may so
" speak, extravagant, may appear in those *prodigious*
" CROSSES that were seen in our time, *viz.* in the
" year 1660, in the kingdom of Naples, after the
" *eruption of the fiery mountain Vesuvius*; of which
" prodigies the learned Kircherus has given an ac-
" count in a particular Diatribe: for these *crosses*
" were seen on linen-garments, as shirt-sleeves,
" women's aprons, that had lain open to the air, and
" upon the exposed parts of sheets; which is
" the less to be admired, because, as Kircher fairly
" guesses, the mineral vapours were, by the texture
" that belongs to linen (which consists of threads
" crossing one another, for the most part, at or near
" right angles) easily determined to run along in
" almost straight lines, crossing each other, and con-
" sequently to frame spots resembling some one,
" and some another kind of *crosses*. These were
" *extremely numerous* in the several parts of the
" kingdom of Naples; insomuch that the Jesuit, that
" sent the relation to Kircher, says, that he himself
" found thirty in one altar-cloth, that fifteen were
" found upon the smock-sleeve of a woman, and that
" he reckoned eight in a boy's hand: also their colour
" and magnitude were very unequal, and their figures
" discrepant, as may appear by many pictures of
" them drawn by the relator; *they would not wash*
" *out with simple water, but required soap*; their *dura-*
" *tion* was also unequal, some lasting ten or fifteen days,
" and others *longer*, before they disappeared *."

1. The first observation I shall make on this curious narrative, is, that these Vesuvian *crosses* appear to

* Works of Mr. Boyle, in folio, vol. iv. p. 393.

have

have been impressed only on the garments, and not on the bodies: just contrary to those occasioned by the lightning at Wells; which were on the bodies, and not on the garments: while the Julian crosses appeared on *both*. The reader, therefore, if he likes it, may suppose, without any absurdity, that in the case at Jerusalem, the crosses on the bodies were caused by the *lightning*; and the crosses on the garments, by the *eruption from the foundations*.

2. The Vesuvian crosses were *extremely numerous*; which agrees well with the relations of Sozomene and Theodoret, the last of whom says, their garments were *filled* with them.

3. These Vesuvian crosses were hardly to be washed out: which exactly agrees with what Socrates and Rufinus tell of the same remarkable quality in the crosses at Jerusalem.

4. Lastly, we understand, that the marks of some of these were of considerable duration; as were those mentioned by Gregory Nazianzene; which, he says, continued to the time he wrote.

So much then for the contemporary evidence; which, though *fathers of the church*, are come off, we see, with honour: and most so in a circumstance of a very delicate nature.

In the next class are Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomene and Theodoret. And all they add to the miraculous of Gregory's relation, are these two particulars: 1. The *lightning*, or a fire from Heaven, mentioned by Socrates. And, 2. this other circumstance, told us by Theodoret, that *when they began to dig the foundations, and carry out the earth, an incredible number of people was employed all day long upon the work. But in the night, the earth, thus taken out, returned,*

of

*of its own accord, from the valley into which it had been thrown**.

The case of the *lightning* hath been considered already, where it was brought in to explain the nature of the *crosses*. And, on that occasion, its close connexion with the rest of the phænomena was examined and explained.

What rests to be accounted for is only the *filling again of the foundations* with the earth that had been thrown out. And this appears to be one of those natural events, which, when men's minds are possessed with miracles (whether real or imaginary) they are wont to explain into prodigies: of the same nature and origin, doubtless, with that imagination in Gregory, that when the crowd, which were tumultuously breaking into the church, had stopped up the passage, they were kept back by an invisible hand. For admit the fact as Theodoret relates it, that the *foundations* were filled again, and the *valley*, into which the earth had been thrown, was emptied; nothing was more natural than for an *earthquake* to do both, if it did any thing at all. The usual effect it is observed to produce, being an entire alteration in the face of things; such as the filling what is empty, and the emptying what is full. Cassiodorus, called *the Senator*, (who abridged the *Tripartite History* which Epiphanius Scholasticus composed out of those of Socrates, Sozomene, and Theodoret), smooths what looked too rugged in this miracle, by the lightness and currency of his expression, *nocte vero spontanea terra de valle crescebat* †; suffering the reader to go at his pleasure

* Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὀρύττειν ἤρξαντο καὶ τὸν χοῦν ἐκφορεῖν, πανημέριον μὲν τοῦτο ἔδρων μυριάδες πολλαί. νύκτωρ δὲ ὁ χοῦς αὐτομάτως ἀπὸ τῆς φάραγγος μετετίθετο. Eccl. Hist. L. iii. c. 20.

† L. vi. c. 43.

into

into the solution here given: In support of which it will be proper to observe, that the shocks of the *earthquake* were repeated at different times. Gregory, we see, tells us of one which happened by *day*, when the labourers were driven for refuge to a neighbouring church. On the other hand, Socrates as expressly mentions one by night *: the very same (as appears from the similarity of the effects) which Socrates speaks of, in these words: *On the coming day, when they were to begin with the foundation, a great earthquake happened* †: Sozomene's cast out *stones from the foundation*; so did that of Socrates ‡. It *overturned a portico*, and crushed to death several who were then abiding in it §: And this Theodoret expressly says happened by *night*, and to men asleep ||.

The *order*, or, to speak more properly, *casual* disposition of Theodoret's relation, is this:—The miraculous filling again of the foundations—The dispersion of the lime and sand by tempests—The earthquake—After that the eruption, and then, for a close, the fall of the portico.

From hence I would observe, 1. That, though Theodoret, by the turn of his expression, would seem to insinuate, that the eruption followed the earthquake very speedily **; yet we see, by Sozomene,

* Διὰ τῆς νυκτὸς σεισμὸς μέγας ἐπιγενόμενος. L. iii. cap. 20.

† Λέγεται τῆς ἐπιούσης, καθ' ἣν πρῶτον θεμέλιον ἤμελλον ὁποτίθεσθαι, σεισμὸν γενέσθαι μέγαν. L. v. c. 22.

‡ Ἀνέβρασε τοὺς λίθους τῶν πάλαι θεμέλιον τοῦ ναοῦ. Socrat.

Ὑπὸ δὲ κλόνου τῆς γῆς ἐκ βάθρων ἀναδοθῆναι τοὺς λίθους. Sozom.

§ Καὶ δημόσιαι Στοαὶ ἐν αἷς κατέλυον ἀθρόον κατερρύησαν καὶ οἱ πλείους ἐγκαταληφθέντες, οἱ μὲν αὐτίκα ἀπώλοντο, &c. Sozom.

|| Καὶ Νύκτωρ δὲ παμπόλλων ἔν τινι πελαζούσῃ καθευδόντων Στοᾷ, κατηνέχθη μὲν ἀθρόως σὺν τῷ ὀρόφῳ τὸ οἰκοδόμημα· τοὺς δὲ καθεύδοντας συνέχωσεν ἅπαντας. Theodor.

** Πρῶτον μὲν σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγιστος—ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐκ ἔδεσαν, πῦρ ἐκ τῶν ὀρυσσομένων θεμελίων ἀναδραμὸν, &c. Theodor.

there was a considerable space between; sufficient to clear again the foundations from the ruin they had suffered *. But lest it should be said (as it hath been observed there were shocks of an earthquake at *different* times) this might be what immediately preceded that eruption, it will be proper to take notice, that the reflection Theodoret makes upon it is the very same with, and, indeed, appears to be borrowed from, what Socrates makes on the earthquake, which he expressly says happened by *night* †. Now, between this, and the eruption, he tells us, there was time sufficient for many to come out of the country to Jerusalem, whither the fame of the earthquake had brought them ‡. But Theodoret's own expression helps us to ascertain the thing. He says the fire broke out, ἐκ τῶν ὀρυσσομένων θεμελίων, *from the foundations which were ready dug*, in order to be built upon, which supposes what Sozomene says, to be true, that there was time to repair the disorders which *that* shock of the earthquake had occasioned.

And thus Cassiodorus understood him: For, speaking, as we observed above, of this miraculous return of the earth, he says, *every thing was prepared anew* §.

By this time the Reader begins to see day, through the thick confusion of Theodoret's cloud of circumstances; in which, his addition of the wonderful, in

* Ὡς δὲ σείων ἔληξεν ὁ Θεὸς, αὖθις ἐπειρῶντο τοῦ ἔργου οἱ περιλειφθέντες— πάλιν ἀνήνυτα ἐσπούδαζον. λόγος οὖν ἅμα τε τὸ δεύτερον ἐνεχείρουν τῷ ἔργῳ, καὶ πῦρ, &c. Sozom.

† Διὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ γενομένου Ἰουδαίους κατέλαβε. Socrat.

Καὶ τοὺς παντελῶς ἀμυήτους τῶν θείων ἐκανῶς κατέπληξεν. Theodor.

‡ Καὶ φήμη ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον ἦγε καὶ τοὺς πόῤῥω διάγοντας, παρόντων οὖν σφόδρα πολλῶν ἕτερον τεράστιον ἐπιγίνεται. πῦρ γὰρ, &c. Socrat.

§ Nocte vero spontanea terra de valle crescebat. Solutis itaque prioris etiam fundamenti reliquiis, nova omnia preparabant. L. vi. c. 43.

filling

filling again the works, amounts only to this, that an earthquake, in the night, tumbled some rubbish into the *foundations*; and forced some out from a *valley* into which it had been thrown.

The disjointed parts in Gregory, Socrates, and Sozomene, and which are still further distorted by Theodoret, the Latin Historian Rufinus fairly reduces to their place. "Behold (says he) in the *night*, the "last that preceded the day for laying the founda- "tion, a prodigious earthquake arises, by which, not "only the stones of the foundations are cast abroad "and dispersed, but almost all the edifices, that were "about the place, are thrown down and levelled. "Public porticos also, in which a great multitude of "Jews, who were observed to push on the work with "most vigour, had their abode, being thrown down, "bury all that are found under them in their ruins *." Thus Rufinus, by *fairly putting together* the several parts of one event, hath shewn, that levelling the ground, and overthrowing the porticos, were the simple consequences of the earthquake: while Theodoret, by *disjointing* them, and delivering the effects separately, and without their common cause, hath made two miracles out of one natural event.

The Reader now sees what the FATHERS have to say on the occasion. He has had their testimony laid at large before him. Let us stop a moment then, and cast a general eye upon the whole. I per-

* Ecce, Nocte, quæ ad incipiendum opus jam sola restabat, Terræ motus ingens oboritur, et non solum fundamentorum saxa longeque lateque jactantur, verum etiam totius pene loci ædificia complanantur. Porticus quoque publicæ, in quibus Judæorum multitudo, quæ operi videbatur insistere, commanebat, ad solum deductæ, omnes Judæos, qui reperti sunt, oppressere. L. x. c. 37, &c.

suade myself we shall see such a concurrence and consistency in the accounts of the TWO PARTIES; so perfect an agreement between the Pagan testimony, and the *first* class of Christian writers; so close a dependency between *these* and the *second* class; and such a connection and enchainment of one fact to another, throughout the whole, as will force the most backward to confess, that the hand of God was of a truth in this wonderful defeat.

Ammianus Marcellinus, Julian, and Ambrose, speak simply of the fiery eruption; Chrysostom goes one step further, and tells us of its fatal effects. Gregory enters more minutely into the affair: he ushers it in with what is always found to be the precursors of this dreadful judgment, *storms* and *earthquakes*: and closes the scene with two meteoric phænomena, likely enough to succeed it, though, indeed, not so much in the way of common observation.

The following writers, Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomene, and Theodoret, add little to these relations. But the manner in which they tell their story (at the same time that it confirms, and explains the accounts of those who went before) proves they are not mere transcribers from their predecessors; at least not from such of them as now remain; which amounts to the same as if they themselves were original.

Thus, for instance, Gregory, indeed, mentions the *cross* upon the garments; but it is to Socrates only, who speaks of the *lightning*, that we owe the knowledge of the *cause*.

So again, Gregory calls them *lucid* crosses; but we are indebted to Rufinus, Socrates, and Theodoret, for the discovery of their specific nature; who tell us, that they shone by night, were dark-coloured by day, and could not easily be washed out.

This

This will lead us to observe another mark of truth in these relations; That the most wonderful circumstances, such as the *qualities* of these crosses, and the lucid circle round the *aërial* cross (circumstances which might seem to be made at pleasure for the sake of the marvellous) prove to be the *very qualities* which belong physically to their respective natures.

Nay, where their prepossessions had led them to find prodigies in accidents the most common; as where Gregory ascribes the impediment to enter the church-doors to an invisible hand; and Theodoret, the filling up the foundations, to be the return of the same earth back to its post; they have themselves honestly recorded those very *facts* which enable us to rectify their mistakes: Thus the *confusion* of the crowd, which Gregory mentions, when they were endeavouring tumultuously to force their way, very naturally accounts for the impediment: and the *earthquake*, Theodoret speaks of, could not but produce that new face in the foundations, which he took to be miraculous.

Once more. The *fathers* indeed record many dreadful circumstances: but then none of them prove false terrors. If there were *storms* and *tempests*, they do their work; the sand and lime are dispersed: When the *lightning* falls, the tools and instruments of building are consumed and melted: the *earthquake* overthrows porticos: The *fiery eruption* tears in pieces the foundations: and not one of these attacks upon impiety, but what di-perses, maims, or destroys the assembled workmen, and their abettors.

After this too we are told, the various effects it had upon the minds of all, how differently soever interested. This is of more importance than appears at first sight. Invention and fable is not wont to go thus far. It may

tell us of *appearances*; but it will never venture to speak of *effects*, which the hearer could immediately disprove. That which has a fairy entrance, has a fairy exit. Here the effects are mentioned that the truth may be examined. Chrysostome actually appeals, for the reality of the *eruption*, to the sight of the burnt and shattered foundations, and to the maimed and scorched survivors amongst the workmen. And All of them might have appealed, for the reality of the *storms* and *lightning* (which dispersed the lighter materials, and consumed the heavier, together with the tools and instruments of work) to the conduct of Julian and Alypius: For what other reason can be assigned, I do not say, for their *deferring*, but for their *giving up*, the whole enterprize *?

Having now discoursed so largely on the several circumstances of this event, and yet (by reason of the *occasional* mention of them) not having been able to preserve the order in which they happened; it may tend to support, or at least to illustrate, what hath been already said, if we give a general view of them in one continued and connected relation.

And here our principal Guide will be the *nature of the phænomena*: for though the Christian Writers will not be useless, yet their perpetual violation of the order of time makes it necessary to regulate their accounts on the reason of things.

In excuse of their conduct, something is to be ascribed to the literary genius of those times, which was inaccurate and immethodical; something to the nature of their evidence, collected from discourses, where the mention of this illustrious event is only

* Πιστούσθωσαν δὲ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Ἕλληνες, ἡμιτελὲς τὸ ἔργον καταλιπόντες. Soz. L. v. c. 22.—Καὶ αὐτὸν [Ἰουλιανὸν] καὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἰς ἐσχάτην ἀμηχανίαν καὶ αἰσχύνην κατεστρέψαντο. Philost. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 9.

brought

brought in to support some particular point of doctrine or morality then in question; but the principal source of their neglect of order, was a false persuasion that every circumstance was miraculous and out of nature. This hindered them from inquiring into the order of time, and would have prevented them from finding it, had they been disposed to inquire. Besides, the *confusion* of time supported their *system* of the miraculous, by separating the *causes* from the *effects:* and the *regulation* of it would have looked like an impiety, as seeking for that in nature whose source was only in God. This too will account why the fault was not reformed by the Historians who followed the original evidence; and whose business it was to reduce to order the confusion in the occasional works of their predecessors. However, whether the miracles became *casually* multiplied by a neglect of chronology, or that they *purposely* neglected it, in order to multiply them; yet multiplied they were; as we have shewn, in our inquiry into the *nature* of the circumstances. And nothing can better support the *truth of the deduction* arising from this inquiry, than the placing each circumstance in the order in which it happened. This we shall now endeavour to do.

1. The first signs the Almighty gave of his approaching judgment, were the *storms*, *tempests*, and *whirlwinds*. For the incumbent air could not but be affected with the ferment, at that time working in the earth, and exsuding through its pores. These instruments of vengeance performed their office, in the dispersion of the loose materials *.

* Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ γύψου καὶ τιτάνου πολλὰς μεδίμνων συνήθροισαν μυριάδας, ἐξαπίνης ἄνεμοι βίαιοι πνεύσαντες, πάσας ἀθρόως ἐσκέδασαν. Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 20.

2. After

2. After these followed the *lightning*, the usual consequence of the clash and collision of clouds, driven forcibly together by storms and tempests. The effects this produced were, *first*, destroying the more solid materials, and melting down the iron instruments *: and *secondly*, impressing that prodigious mark on the bodies and garments of the assistants. For what *Socrates* says is remarkable, that the *night after* (for this *lightning*, by his account, was in the *day*) the shining crosses appeared upon their garments †: which was as soon as they could appear, with that eclat. But it may not be improper to observe, that Rufinus seems to have mixed together the fire from heaven and the fire from the earth; for he gives all the effects of *both* fires, mentioned by others, to the single *one* he himself speaks of ‡.

3. The *earthquake* came next: which, Socrates says, happened in the *night* §; that night, in which the marks upon the garments were first observed. Its effects were these. It cast out the stones of the old foundations (which gave occasion to a remark, that

* Πῦρ γὰρ ἐξ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ κατασκῆψαν, πάντα τὰ τῶν οἰκοδόμων ἐργαλεῖα διέφθειρεν. ἦν γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑπὸ τῆς φλογὸς ἀπολλυμένας τὰς σφύρας, τὰς γλαρίδας, τὺς πρίονας, τὺς πελέκεις, τὰ σκέπαρνα, πάντα ἁπλῶς ὅσα πρὸς τὸ ἔργον ἐπιτήδεια εἶχον οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι. Socrat. l. iii. c. 20.

† Καὶ γὰρ τῇ ἐρχομένῃ νυκτὶ, Σφραγῖδες σταυρῶ ἀκτινοειδεῖς, τοῖς ἱματίοις αὐτῶν ἐντετυπωμέναι ἐφάνησαν. L. iii. c. 20.

‡ Ædes erat quædam—in qua ferramenta aliaque operi necessaria servabantur; e qua subito globus quidam ignis emicuit, et per medium plateæ percurrens, adustis et exterminatis qui aderant Judæis, ultra citraque ferebatur. Hoc iterum sæpiusque et frequentissime per totum illum diem repetens, pertinacis populi temeritatem flammis ultricibus coercebat—insequenti nocte in vestimentis omnium signaculum crucis, &c. L. x. c. 37.

§ Καὶ διὰ τῆς Νυκτὸς Σεισμὸς μέγας ἐπεγενόμενος, ἀνέβρασε τὺς λίθεις τῶν πάλαι θεμελίων, &c. L. iii. c. 20.

the

the prophecy of Jesus was now *literally* fulfilled); it shook the earth into the new-dug foundation (of which Theodoret, we see, made a miracle); and it overthrew the adjoining buildings and porticos.

4. Then followed the *fiery eruption* *, which destroyed and maimed so many of the workmen and assistants; and at length forced the undertakers to give over the attempt as desperate †. But it is to be observed, that this eruption was attended both with *storms and tempests* above, and with an *earthquake* below ‡. This, Gregory, an original evidence, directly affirms; and it is altogether consonant to the nature of things. An earthquake could not but immediately precede so violent an eruption; and it is highly probable, that this tumult communicated itself to the neighbouring air. I mention this, because it contributed to the embarras we find in the accounts of the evidence; some of whom have confounded this *latter* storm and earthquake with the *former*. Another observation I would make is, that, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, the fits of the fiery eruption continued longer than the Christian writers represent the matter. Those of them who say the most, seeming to confine the eruptions to one day §, if we except the

* Λόγος οὖν ἅμα τε τὸ δεύτερον ἐνεχείρουν τῷ ἔργῳ, καὶ πῦρ ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῶν θεμελίων τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀνέθορε, καὶ πολλοὺς ἀνήλωσε. καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς παντὼν ἀδεῶς λέγεταί τε καὶ πιστεύεται, καὶ παρ' οὐδενὸς ἀμφιβάλλεται. Sozom. l. v. c. 22.

† Ταῦτα οἱ ἀντίθεοι θεασάμενοι, καὶ τὰς θεηλάτους μάστιγας ὀρρωδήσαντες, ἀπέδρασάν τε καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα κατέλαβον. Theodor. l. iii. c. 20.

‡ Ὡς δὲ ὑπὸ ἀγρίας λαίλαπος, καὶ βρασμοῦ γῆς ἄφνω συνελαθέντες ἐπί τι τῶν πλησίον ἱερῶν—ὅτι βιαζομένους αὐτοὺς καὶ φιλονεικοῦντας περὶ τὴν εἴσοδον, πῦρ ἔστησεν, &c. Greg. Naz. Orat. ix.

§ Ἐπενέμετο μὲν οὖν ταῦτα τὸ πῦρ, δὲ ὅλης τῆς ἡμέρας. Socrat. l. iii. c. 20. Hoc iterum saepiusque et frequentissime per totam illum diem repetens, *pertinacis* populi temeritatem flammis ultricibus coercebat.

abridged

abridged account of Philostorgius, which intimates, they continued as long as any one attempted to go on with the enterprize *: and they would hardly desist for the impediment of a single day. It is absurd to suppose they did: and Ammianus's words clearly imply they did not †: consequently the eruption lasted much longer; and continued to be repeated as often as the projectors began to renew the attempt, till it had fairly tired them out. This, the reader will find, is of importance to establish the divine interposition. Yet the *Fathers* are so impatient to be at their favourite miracles, the *crosses* in the *sky*, and on the *garments*, that they slip negligently over what ought principally to have been insisted on, the FIERY ERUPTION; and leave what was truly miraculous, to run after an imaginary prodigy. The great St. Chrysostome, indeed, must be excepted out of this censure. He would not suffer the change to be put upon him; but judiciously lays the stress upon that which would bear it.

5. The last appearance was *a lucid cross in the heavens, circumscribed within a luminous circle.* Nature, put so suddenly into commotion by its Creator, was, on the despair and dispersion of his enemies, as suddenly calmed and composed. And then appeared, in the yet clouded firmament, this noble phænomenon, in a lunar halo. And what could be conceived so proper to close this tremendous scene, or to celebrate this decisive victory, as the CROSS triumphant, incircled with the HEROIC symbol of conquest?

* Τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ, πῦρ ἐπενέμετο τοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι τολμῶντας· τοῦτο δὲ, Σεισμὸς ἐκώννυιν. Philost. Hist. Eccl. L. vii. c. 9.

† Metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis *aliquoties* operantibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento *destinatius* repellente, *cessavit* inceptum. L. xxiii. c. 1.

The

The *order* here given to the several *parts* of this event, is further supported by Marcellinus's narrative of that parallel disaster at Nicomedia; which we have already employed, and more than once, though for different purposes, to illustrate the fact in question. And it is remarkable, the Roman historian not only records the same circumstances, but assigns to each of them the same order of time. 1. It began with *storms and tempests.* "Concreti nubium globi nigrantium," &c. 2. Then followed the *lightning*, "Dein velut numine summo fatales torquente manubias," &c. 3. Then the *earthquake.* "Horrifico tremore terrarum, civitatem et suburbana funditus everterunt." 4. And lastly the *fiery eruption.* "Palantes abrupte flammarum ardores," &c.

The order, so carefully preserved by Marcellinus, at Nicomedia, is, we see, totally neglected by the Christian historians, at Jerusalem. And what but this could suggest so different a conduct? *He* related what he rightly understood to be, *in the whole*, a natural event; *They*, what they falsely conceived to be, *in every part*, miraculous.

To conclude this head, let me observe, That in an aggregate concurrent evidence, a minute *uniformity* on the one hand, or a real *inconsistency* on the other, equally tend to the discredit of the fact in question. In the first case, we justly suspect the *evidence* to be concerted; in the latter, the *fact* to be ill founded. Because, where men relate what they receive from one common object, their accounts must be as various as the variety of the several recipients; which is just so much as to give a *different colouring* to the same things, not to *alter* the things themselves. When we see, therefore, the minutest uniformity in the colouring, we conclude them not to be originals, who fairly represent

sent from nature, but copyists, in concert from one another. And where, again, that common object, from which men receive their intelligence, is *real*, there, their accounts can admit of no inconsistency, because the nature of things is invariable. But if this object be the *creature of the imagination*, begot by the disordered passions, which are always changing, the testimony of the deluded observers will never be secure from contradiction.

Now the *Christian testimony* which we have examined, on this occasion, appears to be entirely free from both these suspicious circumstances. They tell it, indeed, in the whole, variously; but with a perfect consistence of all its parts. They shew, by this, they wrote neither in concert, nor at random; but drew from one common object, and an object that was real.

Having explained the *general cause* of that variety, in concurrent evidence, which most establishes its credit; it may be proper to consider, the *peculiar cause*, in the evidence in question.

Where a notorious fact consists of many circumstances, the observers, according to their different tempers and dispositions, will be differently affected. Some will be struck with *this* circumstance, some with *that*. Hence one man will speak of a cause without its effect: Another, of the effect without the cause. *This* relator will run two circumstances into one; *That* will split one into two. And if, of these circumstances, there are some not rightly understood, the order of time will be neglected: and, from that neglect, another embarras, in the evidence, will arise, a different order assigned by different writers to the same circumstance.

Lastly, let me observe, it is not *every appearance*, neither, of a *concerted agreement*, or *irreconciled*

contradiction, that should make us lightly reject a testimony of (otherwise) established credit. A single circumstance, in the event before us, will shew how easily, in either case, we may be betrayed into a wrong judgment. Nazianzen, Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomene, Theodoret, are so exact, and in so perfect agreement, about the *cross upon the garments* (while each, in his turn, overlooks more material circumstances) that if we take it in the light they place it, of a great and amazing prodigy, we should be apt to suspect it only a studied ornament to their relation. Yet the finding, on examination, that the properties, they assign to these crosses, lead to the discovery of their real nature, this entirely acquits them of invention. Again, what on the other hand has a stronger appearance of *contradiction* than one of them affirming that these crosses were *shining* and *radiated*; and another, that they were *sombrous* and *dark-coloured?* Yet this apparent contradiction assists us in the discovery of one of their physical properties; and that discovery helps us to reconcile the contradiction; as we find they were black by day, and lucid by night.

I chose to let this single circumstance of the *crosses* supply me with these instances of the contrary qualities (of too great conformity, and too little consistency, in a concurrent evidence) which equally tend to render it suspicious; because, indeed, these contrary qualities frequently exist together, in the testimony of *false witnesses to the same fact.*

We come now, in the last place, to that refuse of evidence, which we threw together as of no account; Philostorgius, Theophanes, Orosius, Nicephorus, Zonaras, Cedrenus, and their fellows. These

These men, like impertinent players, have only the language of others, without any sense of their own; save, that they, sometimes, presume to add their own inventions to their author's conceits. Thus Philostorgius and Theophanes clap on a couple of senseless lies, to the well-composed relation of their predecessors; which, like wens in a fair-proportioned body, stick out so unsightly as never to be mistaken for its natural members.

The first of them tells a story (which Nicephorus has repeated) of a certain cave laid open by the workmen, in which was found the Gospel of St. John, miraculously preserved*. As this was apparently invented in favour of the *religion of reliques*, I shall deliver it up to the inquisition of Dr. Middleton.

Theophanes tells his tale on better grounds. He affirms, that the marks of the cross were not only found at Jerusalem; but at Antioch, and other cities; and that they appeared on the coverings of the altars, on the church-books, and on the sacred vestments†. Well fare Theophanes, for a punctual relator. I fancy Philostorgius would have been at a loss to produce his miraculous *gospel*: But without doubt, Theophanes knew where to find enough of his own manufacture, to save him from blushing, had he been of so weak a complexion.

* Καὶ δὴ καὶ τῶν θεμελίων εὐτρεπιζομένων, εἷς τῶν λίθων εἰς τὴν ἰσχάτην κρηπίδα τεταγμένων κινηθεὶς, στόμιον ἄντρου τινὸς παρέδειξεν, ἐνειργασμένου τῇ πέτρᾳ, &c.—Ἐντυγχάνει στήλῃ τινὶ—ᾗ τὴν χεῖρα ἐπιλαβὼν εὑρίσκει βιβλίον αὐτῇ εὐπικείμενον. Hist. Eccl. vii. c. 14.

† —αὐτομάτως τε τοῖς ἁπλώμασι τῶν θυσιαστηρίων καὶ βίβλοις καὶ ἄλλοις ἐσθήμασι τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν, καὶ ἐν ἱματίοις οὐ μόνον Χριστιανῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἰουδαίων ἐπεπόλαζε τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ, οὐ μόνον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ καὶ ἄλλαις πόλεσι. Chronog. p. 44.

CHAP. IV.

THE Reader hath now the whole of the church-evidence laid before him. It hath been largely and minutely examined; and, I presume, so fully explained and vindicated, as to make it needless to take notice of any *particular* Writer, who hath objected to its credit.

Yet the remarks of M. JAMES BASNAGE, on this collective evidence, are so very extraordinary, and his authority in the learned world so high, that I might be reasonably accused of neglect, should I pass him over in silence, though a great part of his censure hath been already obviated.

This very learned man, whose candour, exactness, and strength of reasoning, have advanced him to the first rank in letters, hath, amongst his other excellent labours, enriched the Public with a *History of the Jews*, from the beginning of the Christian *Æra*, down to the present times; composed in a judicious method, interspersed with many curious inquiries, and abounding in a vast variety of good learning.

In the sixth book of this work, he gives us, what he calls, an *Examination of those miracles which defeated Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple*: where, to speak freely, I find not one of those qualities, which have rendered him so deservedly famous amongst the Protestants abroad.

After having told us what share Julian had in the attempt, and how easily he brought the Jews into his measures, he goes on in this manner:

"It

* " It is said, that God hindered the building of " the temple, by three succeeding miracles. Three " ancient

* On dit que Dieu l'empêcha par trois miracles consecutifs. Trois historiens anciens, Socrate, Sozomene, & Theodoret, raportent unanimement ces faits. Sozomene même, qui, à peur que quelques incredules ne les regardent comme fabuleux, renvoie ces incredules à la deposition des temoins oculaires, qui vivoient encore lors qu'il écrivoit. Le prémier de ces miracles fut un tremblement de terre, qui arriva lors qu'on nettoioit les fondemens de l'ancien temple pour en jetter des nouveaux : et ce tremblement de terre renversa les materiaux. Il y a deux variations sur ce prémier miracle; car Theodoret le fait preceder de je ne sai quelle vertu divine, qui raportoit la nuit les anciens materiaux & les ordures qu'on avoit ôtées, et ensuite d'un vent miraculeux, qui dissipa les pierres, quoi qu'on eût jetté dessus une prodigieuse quantité de chaux et de ciment pour les affermir. Secondement, Sozomene fait mourir par ce tremblement de terre un *grand nombre de personnes*, qui étoient venues là en qualité d'ouvriers, ou de spectateurs, et qui furent écrasées sous les ruines des maisons voisines et des porches, sous lesquels ils s'étoient retirez. Le second miracle fut un feu, qui, sortant des fondemens qu'on venoit de poser, consuma une partie des ouvriers, et mit le reste en fuite: l'un fait descendre ce feu du ciel, et les deux autres le font sortir de terre. Socrate le fait durer un jour entier pour consumer les hoiaux, les peles, et tous les instrumens destinez à l'ouvrage. Sozomene raporte avec quelque incertitude *la mort des ouvriers*. Il marque même qu'on varioit un peu; les uns assûrent que le feu les avoit consumez, lors qu'ils avoient voulu *entrer dans le temple*; ce qui étoit impertinent; puis que les fondemens étoient à peine achevez; & les autres soutenoient que cela étoit arrivé, lors qu'on commença à remuer la terre, et à la transporter. Il y a une quatrieme variation sur ce miracle; car on ajoûte que les Juifs reconurent malgré eux que J. Christ étoit Dieu, et qu'ils ne laisserent pas de perseverer dans leur enterprise; ce qui est contradictoire. Mais il n'importe: leur fermeté donna lieu à un troisieme prodige. Car ils s'aperçurent le matin qu'il y avoit un grand nombre d'étoiles raionnantes semées sur leurs habits, qu'ils voulurent effacer sans pouvoir y reüssir. Sozomene y ajoute des étoiles qui étoient faites avec autant d'art, que

pi

" ancient historians, SOCRATES, SOZOMENE, and " THEODORET, unanimously relate these facts. And " as

si elles y avoient été mises par la main de l'ouvrier. Theodoret s'écarte un peu; car au lieu d'étoiles rayonnantes il en met de noires, ce qui representoit mieux le crime et le supplice des Juifs, et à même tems il en fait écraser plusieurs qui étoient endormis sous un porche. Mais la grande variation roulle sur l'effet de ce troisieme miracle; car les uns assurent que les Juifs se retirerent chez eux aussi endurcis que s'ils n'avoient rien vû. Mais les deux autres pretendent que la plupart se firent Chrétiens, et que le bruit de leur conversion alla jusqu'aux oreilles de l'Empereur Julien. Nous avons crû devoir remarquer ces differentes circonstances, à fin qu'on puisse mieux peser la verité de ce récit. Les uns trouveront quelque plaisir à multiplier le nombre de ces miracles, comme Theodoret, et y ajoûter même ce que les Ecrivains modernes en ont dit. Mais il est juste que les autres y trouvent aussi les raisons qu'on peut avoir de suspendre sa foi. J'ajouterai seulement deux choses. L'une, que la preuve que Sozomene allegue pour montrer la verité de ce qu'il avance, est très foible. Il en appelle *à l'evenement*, & soutient qu'on ne peut plus douter de cette longue suite de miracles, parce que le temple ne fut point achevé. Mais cet historien avoit-il oublié que la permission ne fut donnée aux Juifs, que lors que Julien partoit pour son expedition contre les Perses, dans laquelle il fut tué, & qu'ainsi on n'avoit pas besoin de tant de miracles pour empêcher la structure d'un edifice? L'opposition des Chrétiens, qui profiterent de l'éloignement du prince, sa mort, et l'elevation de Jovien, ennemi des Juifs, suffisoient pour arrêter tout court ce dessein. D'ailleurs, il renvoye ses lectures en termes vagues, à des temoins oculaires, sans nommer, ni indiquer personne. Enfin Cyrille de Jerusalem, qui étoit alors Evêque de cette ville, devoit être sur les lieux, puis que ce fut lui qui rassura le peuple par le moïen d'un oracle de Daniel, qui avoit prédit, à ce qu'il croyoit, que l'ouvrage ne reussiroit pas. Cependant Cyrille n'a jamais parlé de tous ces miracles. Ce n'est pas qu'il ne les ait sû: il écrivit, dit-on, à Constantin le Jeune, pour lui apprendre qu'il étoit plus heureux que son pere, sous l'empire duquel on avoit trouvé en terre la croix du fils de Dieu, puis que le ciel lui faisoit voir un prodige plus éclatant: c'étoit une croix plus lumineuse que le soleil, que toute la ville de Jerusalem avoit vue au firmament un long

" as to Sozomene, in particular, who is apprehensive, " there might be certain unbelievers, who would give " no credit to them, he sends such to the depositions " of those who had been eye-witnesses, and were yet " living when he wrote his history.

" The *first* of these miracles was an EARTHQUAKE, " which happened at the time they were clearing " the old foundations, in order to lay *new*: and " this earthquake overthrew their magazines of ma- " terials.

" There are two variations on the subject of this " first miracle. For Theodoret makes it preceded, " 1. by I can't tell what divine power; which, in " the night, brought back the old materials and " rubbish into the place from whence they had been " taken: and 2dly, by a miraculous wind, which " dispersed the stones, though they had been covered " by a prodigious quantity of lime and mortar, to " bind them into one solid mass. The second va- " riation is in Sozomene's making this earthquake " destroy *a great number of people*, who were there " in

espece de tems. Pourquoi parler de cette croix, et se taire sur ces miracles? Il apprend aux Juifs qu'ils verront le signe de la croix, lequel precedera la venue du fils de Dieu, & ne dit pas un seul mot de celles qui avoient été attachées miraculeusement à leurs habits. Ce silence d'un Evêque qui étoit sur les lieux, qui a noté les miracles et la conversion des Juifs, est suspect, lors qu'il n'y a que des temoins eloignez qui parlent. Cependant il ne faut pas dissimuler, que si un des Chronologistes Juifs soutient, que le temple ne fut point bâti à cause de la mort imprevue de Julien, un autre assure que ce temple, rebati à grands frais, tomba, et que *le lendemain un grand feu, qui vint du ciel, fondit les fenestrages qui restoient, & fit périr une multitude innombrable de Juifs*. Cet aveu des Rabbins est d'autant plus considerable qu'il est injurieux à la nation, et que ces messieurs ne sont pas accoutumez à copier les Ouvrages des Chrêtiens. Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, Lib. vi. c. 18, 19.

" in quality of workmen or lookers-on, and were " buried under the ruins of the neighbouring houses " and porticos, whither they had retired for shelter.

" The *second* miracle was a FIRE, which burst " from the foundations they were then preparing; " and destroyed one part of the workmen, and put " the rest to flight. 1. One of these historians " makes this fire to descend from Heaven: the *other* " *two* bring it from beneath. 2. Socrates says, it " continued the whole day, and consumed the pick-" axes, shovels, and all the tools and instruments " destined to this service. 3. Sozomene relates the " *death of the workmen* with some uncertainty. " Nay, he observes, that here the evidence varied " a little; some affirming that the fire destroyed " them as they were striving *to enter the temple* " (which was certainly an idle story, since even the " foundations were hardly finished;) while others say, " it happened when they first began to break ground, " and carry off the rubbish. 4. There is a fourth " variation on the subject of this miracle; for it is " added, the Jews confessed, though in spite of " themselves, that JESUS CHRIST was God; and " yet they did not cease to persevere in their attempt: " which is a manifest contradiction.

" But no matter for that: their obstinacy gave " occasion to a *third* miracle. For, in the morning, " they perceived a great number of SHINING STARS " scattered over their habits; which they tried to " efface, but in vain. Sozomene adds, there were " of these stars so artfully formed, that the hand of " a workman could not have done them better: " Theodoret deviates a little here; for, instead of " the *shining stars*, he speaks of *black* ones. Such " as indeed more properly marked the crime and

" punishment of the Jews. And at the same time, " he crushes to death a great number, who were fast " asleep under a portico.

" But the great variation of all turns upon the *effect* " of the third miracle. For one assures us, that the " Jews returned home as hardened as if they had " seen nothing: whereas the other two pretend, that " the greater part embraced the Christian faith; and " that the news of their conversion reached even to " the ears of Julian himself.

" We have conceived it to be the duty of a faith- " ful historian to take notice of these differences, in " order to assist the reader, in forming a right " judgment of the truth of the whole relation. Some, " doubtless, will find their pleasure in multiplying " the number of these miracles, like Theodoret; " and even in adding every thing which modern " writers have said to set them off. But it is no " more than fitting that men of a different turn should " be made acquainted with the reasons there are " to *suspend* their belief.

" I will only add these two observations to what " has been already said. The *one* is, that the ar- " gument Sozomene brings to prove the truth of " what he advances, is a very weak one. He appeals " to the issue; and maintains, we can no longer " doubt of this long train of miracles, since the temple " was never finished. But could this historian forget " that the Jews did not obtain their permission to " rebuild it till the time of Julian's setting out for " his Persian expedition, in which he perished? " As this was the case, there was little need of all " these miracles to hinder the *erection of a single* " *building*; surely, a sufficient cause for cutting short " an enterprize of this nature may be found in the

" opposition

" opposition of the Christians, who might take " advantage of the prince's absence in a remote " region, of his death there, and the advancement " of Jovian, who was an enemy to the Jews. Besides, " the historian refers his readers, in a vague, in- " definite manner, to the eye-witnesses of the fact, " without pointing out one single person by name.

" But lastly, Cyrill of Jerusalem, who was, at that " time, Bishop of the place, and must have been " upon the spot, since it was he, who confiding in " a prophecy of Daniel (which had foretold, as he " thought, that the attempt would prove unsuccessful) " encouraged and animated the people to repose " their confidence in God. Notwithstanding, this " same Cyrill has never taken the least notice of " these many miracles: and yet it certainly was not " because he was no friend to miracles: We are " told he wrote to Constantine the Younger, to " inform him, that he was more happy than his " father, under whose empire the cross of Christ " had been found here on earth, since Heaven, to " grace his reign, had displayed a more illustrious " prodigy: which was, a cross much brighter than " the sun, seen in the firmament for a long time " together, by the whole city of Jerusalem. Why, " now, was that cross remembered, and all these " miracles forgotten? He assures the Jews, they " shall see the sign of the cross; and that it will " precede the coming of the Son of God; and yet " he says not one single word of those which had " been miraculously affixed to their habits. The " silence of a Bishop, who was upon the place, who " loved miracles, and laboured for the conversion " of the Jews, looks very suspicious; while at the

" same time, they, who do speak to it, lived at a " distance.

" However, it ought not to be dissembled, that, " if *one* of the Jewish Chronologists maintains, that " the sudden and unexpected death of Julian pre- " vented the rebuilding the temple; *another* of them " assures us it was rebuilt, and that, when this was " done at a vast expence, it tumbled down again, " and, *the next day, a dreadful fire, which fell* " *from Heaven, melted all the iron instruments that* " *remained, and destroyed an innumerable multitude* " *of Jews.* This confession of the Rabbins is the " more considerable, as it reflects dishonour on the " nation; and these gentry are not wont to copy " from the writings of the Christians."

Before I proceed to a particular examination of this long passage, I shall make these two general remarks upon it.

First, that the learned critic goes all the way upon a *false supposition*; namely, that it was the purpose of these three historians, in their accounts of this event, to place the several circumstances, attending it, in the order of time in which each of them was supposed to happen. I have shewn they had no such purpose, and have explained the cause of their neglecting the order of time *. This was fit to be taken notice of, because the main force in his objections arises from the contrary supposition.

My *second* remark is, that the learned critic embarrasses both himself and his reader, by using, without explaining, the ambiguous term of VARIATION: which may either signify a *contradiction*; or, only a simple *diversity*. His *reasoning* requires you should apply it in the former sense; but his *facts* commonly go no

* See pp. 134, 135.

higher

higher than the latter. This was proper to observe, because a *contradiction* discredits a concurrent evidence: while a simple *diversity* never hurts, and often supports it*.

When a writer's purpose is not to confirm the fact in question; but to render it doubtful and suspected; it will lye upon him to give a good account of every part of the evidence by which it may be supported: because no conclusion can be drawn *against* a fact till the whole testimony *for* it hath been fairly invalidated. It is otherwise when a fact is to be established. In that case, it may be sufficient to select and urge only the most material. Now the learned critic begins his discourse in this manner, *It is said, that God hindered the building of the temple by three succeeding miracles. Three ancient historians,* SOCRATES, SOZOMENE, *and* THEODORET, *unanimously relate these facts.*

His process against the miracle is regular and in form. He first names his witnesses: but does he name them all? So one would be apt to conclude, both from the nature of the case, and the critic's turn of expression: at least one would never suspect that he had omitted any of the first and original evidence. Yet he has omitted all of them. Not only Ambrose, Gregory, Nazianzene, and St. Chrysostome; but even the testimony of Marcellinus himself. This is a proceeding, which bears as hard against the ingenuity of the writer as against the strength of his conclusion: and, with regard to his argument, the utmost this method can effect is only to discredit the witnesses he does think fit to produce and examine; while the fact itself, supported by others, of greater and unquestioned authority, remains entire. But let us view his confutation in the light he would have it seen.

* See p. 139, & seq.

His objection to the *earthquake*, which he calls the FIRST miracle, is, that there are two *variations* concerning it.

The *first* is, that Theodoret *makes it preceded, first, by I can't tell what divine power, which, in the night, brought back the old materials and rubbish into the place from whence they had been taken; and, 2dly, by a miraculous wind, which dispersed the stones, though they had been covered by a prodigious quantity of lime and mortar, to bind them into one solid mass.*

1. As M. Basnage himself here states the case, we see this is of the nature of those *variations*, mentioned just before, that imply no *contradiction*, but only a *diversity*. A case almost essential to the truth of an accumulative evidence, not given in concert. One witness delivers a circumstance omitted by another; and omits a circumstance which the other hath delivered. Thus Theodoret is here said to relate two circumstances preceding the earthquake, of which Socrates and Sozomene are silent: and Sozomene to relate an *effect* of this earthquake, of which Socrates and Theodoret are silent. Now, not to repeat what hath been just observed of the real credit *these diversities* carry with them; what can more strongly support the truth of this earthquake, attested by three historians, than that, when *one* had only recorded the fact itself, the *other two* preserved the memory of those circumstances, which, we have shewn *, this fact was most likely to produce?

2. But on the learned critic's false supposition of an *order of time* observed in these accounts, he might have improved this *variation* into a *contradiction*.

* See pp. 128—130. and pp. 114—116.

And,

And, considering he had this imaginary advantage, one would wonder he did not use it. For, in the order of Theodoret's relation, the filling up the foundations *goes before* the earthquake; whereas from the accounts of Rufinus and Cassiodorus, explained on the reason of things, it appears to have been *after*, and the effect of the earthquake. But, as it hath been shewn *, that the historians had it not in their purpose to observe the order of time, the objection, even when thus stated, is seen to have no weight. However, admit, the historians had it in their purpose to observe the order of time, and that they differed in placing some of the circumstances: what follows? Not that the facts were false: but that the witnesses were men of credit, who did not write in concert. Is not the whole body of civil history full of facts believed by all mankind; about the *order* of which, as they stand connected in time to one another, historians do, and will eternally differ? I have now accidentally lying before me Dr. Hody's learned account of those *illustrious Greeks* who brought the use of their language into the west of Europe; where, speaking of Emmanuel Chrysologus, it appears that a number of writers, contemporary with him, affirm, that he first taught at Venice, then at Florence: while as great a number, and of equal credit, affirm just the contrary, that it was *first* at Florence, and *afterwards* at Venice. In the mean while no body ever doubted that he taught in both places.—And here the distinction between a *natural* and *supernatural* fact (frequently, and indeed, properly urged in these disputes) hath no place. For M. Basnage's objection stands on a *civil*, not a *physical*, reason.

*. See pp. 134, 135.

3. Lastly,

3. Lastly, He tells us, Theodoret says, *a miraculous wind dispersed the stones, though they had been covered by a prodigious quantity of lime and mortar to bind them into one solid mass.* But the best is, Theodoret says no such thing. The candid Critic should not have made his miracles still more wonderful by a false exposition of them. The whole affair, indeed, we think, was one continued declaration of the divine displeasure: but where God employs natural instruments to execute his judgments, they usually work according to their capacities: and Theodoret's *wind* does no more. His words are these—"When they had laid in, and disposed on heaps, many thousand measures of lime and plaster; violent storms, whirlwinds, and tempests, unexpectedly arose, and dispersed them all about *." Here we find nothing told, but what this elementary agency might well perform. So that one cannot conceive what it was that induced this learned man, first to lay so strong an embargo on his heavy weight of stones, and then to disperse them again so lightly; unless, because, as he says, the *Fathers* loved to *talk* of miracles, so he loved to *laugh* at them. But he should have chosen a fitter subject for his mirth.

His *second variation* about the *earthquake* is, in Sozomene's *making it destroy a great number of people who were buried under the ruins of the neighbouring houses and porticos.* Here the *variation* is still more imaginary. Sozomene is not alone in the fact. Theodoret likewise mentions it; though, by placing the fiery eruption between the earthquake and the fall of the porticos, he hath separated the *cause* from

* Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ γύψου καὶ τιτάνου πολλὰς μεδίμνων συνήθροισαν μυριάδας ἐξαπίνης ἄνεμοι βίαιοι πνεύσαντες καὶ στρόβιλοι καὶ καταιγίδες καὶ λαίλαπες, πάσας ἀθρόως ἐσκέδασαν. Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 20.

the

the *effect* *. We should therefore place this instance amongst the *supports*, not the *objections*, to this illustrious event.

The SECOND miracle, according to M. Basnage's representation of things, is *the fire from the foundations*: and concerning this, he assures us, there are no less than *four variations*.

The *first* is, that *one of the historians makes the fire to descend from heaven*; *the other two bring it from beneath*.

The assertion is grounded on a mere mistake of the text. Socrates speaks of *one* fact, when he says, "A "fire came from Heaven, and consumed all the work-"men's tools †;" Sozomene and Theodoret of *another*, when they say, "A fire broke out of the foundations, "and destroyed many of the workmen themselves *." And nothing but much prejudice, or little attention, could have blended *two consistent*, into *one inconsistent* fact. The fire from *heaven*, and the fire from the *foundations*, were different events: and distant from each other in time as well as place. All the mystery is, that Socrates mentions the former, and omits the latter; and Sozomene and Theodoret mention the latter, and omit the former. The *nature of things* *, as well as the rules of interpretation, supports this distinction: and, physically speaking, it had been more to be wondered at, if the storms and tempests had not produced *lightning*, than if a *fiery eruption* had not followed an earthquake.

* See p. 129.

† Πῦρ γὰρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατασκῆψαν, πάντα τὰ τῶν οἰκοδόμων ἐργαλεῖα διέφθειρεν, L. iii. c. 20.

‡ Πῦρ ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῶν θεμελίων τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀνέθορε καὶ πολλὰς ἀνέλωσε— Sozom. L. v. c. 22.—πῦρ ἐκ τῶν ὀρυσσομένων θεμελίων ἀνάδραμον, πλείστους τῶν ὀρυττόντων ἐνέπρησε. Theod. L. iii. c. 20.

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The *second variation is*, that Socrates says, *the fire continued the whole day; and consumed the pick-axes, shovels, and all the tools and instruments destined to the service.*

This *variation* is as fanciful, as the supposition, on which it rises, is false; namely, that Socrates here speaks of the *same* fire mentioned by Sozomene and Theodoret. For if he meant a *different* (as he certainly did), then its continuance for a *whole day* is no *variation*, even in the lowest sense our critic uses it, of one writer's recording a circumstance of the same fact, which another hath omitted.

A *third variation* (says M. Basnage) *is, that Sozomene relates the death of the workmen with some uncertainty. Nay, the historian observes, that here the evidence varied a little. Some affirming that the fire destroyed them as they were striving to enter the temple (which was certainly an idle story, since the foundations were hardly finished); while others say, it happened when they first began to break ground and carry off the rubbish.*

That *Sozomene relates the death of the workmen with some uncertainty* is a strange misrepresentation: his words are these, *It is said, that a fire burst suddenly from the ruins, and destroyed many. And this thing is confidently reported and believed by all, no one man ever calling it in question* *. Could a writer possibly express more confidence in a Fact related? Let the Reader judge.

Indeed, Sozomene does observe, that, though, in the fact itself, all were agreed; yet, in one circumstance attending it, the evidence varied a little. A

* Λέγεται δὲ ἅμα τε τὸ δεινὸν ἐπισχεῖν τῷ ἔργῳ καὶ πῦρ ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῶν θεμελίων τὸ ἱερὸν ἀνθῆκαι, καὶ πολλοὺς ἀνῆλωσαι· καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς πάντων ὡδίνως λέγεσθαί τε καὶ πιστεύεσθαι, καὶ παρ' οὐδενὸς ἀμφισβητεῖσθαι. L. v. c. 22.

passage

passage of Gregory Nazianzene ill understood apparently betrayed him into this groundless remark. But if Sozomene mistook Gregory, M. Basnage has much more grossly mistaken Sozomene.

Gregory delivered his account of the eruption in these words—*They fled together for refuge to an adjoining church—As they strove violently to force their way in, the fire, which burst from the foundations of the temple, met and stopped them; and one part of them it burnt and destroyed* *, &c. Sozomene, alluding to this passage (after he had told us, that the fact of the fire's breaking from the foundations was *believed by all, and contradicted by none*) says, *Indeed there is this small difference in the circumstances; some say the flame met them as they were forcing their way into the church, and produced the effect spoken of above; while others say, it happened when first they began to clear the foundations* †. Sozomene, we see, understood Gregory, as if he had meant, that the flame which met those who were striving to enter the church, happened at some time *different* from that which was said to destroy the men working at the foundations. But he certainly mistook Gregory; who supposes plainly enough, that this destruction happened at the very time they were digging the foundations. Gregory not only assures us that the fact as he tells it, stood *unquestioned* by all (which he could not have said had it related to *another time*); but he expressly says, they fled to this church as to a refuge from the *whirlwind* and *earthquake*. Now the evidence is unanimous, that the whirlwind and earthquake happened as they were

* See pp. 111, 112.

† —Πλὴν ὅτι μέν φασιν ὅτι βιαζομένους αὐτὰς εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν προϊέναι, φλὸξ ἀπαντήσασα, τὸ εἰρημένον εἰργάσατο· οἱ δὲ, ἅμα ἤρξαντο τὸν χῶν ἐκφορεῖν. L. v. c. 22.

preparing

preparing the foundations. In a word, what Sozomene mistook for a *variation*, properly so called, was two different relations of the different parts of the same event. Great numbers *fled* from the whirlwind and earthquake; and these the fire, which burst from the foundations, destroyed as they were striving to enter the church: others *stood* their ground; and these were destroyed on the spot. Unwarily, Sozomene mistook Gregory's narrative of the state, in which the same eruption seized some of the sufferers, for the narrative of a different eruption. But though the ancient relators of this fact had indeed spoken of *different* eruptions, and, in ascribing the same general effect to all, had yet represented the workmen as destroyed, while busied in different places, and in different occupations: What then? Would this have taken off from the credit of their relation? By no means. On the contrary, it must have added to it. For we have seen in part, and shall see more fully hereafter, that the *fits* of this fiery eruption were so obstinate as not to give over till it had brought the directors to despair of the undertaking.

But to return to Sozomene: an attentive writer might have fallen into *his* mistake: What drew M. Basnage aside is not so easily understood. To interpret Sozomene as saying, that it was the *new-built temple*, into which these unhappy sufferers strove to enter, when his whole history shews, the foundations were never finished, implies strange inattention to his subject; or confidence in the implicit faith of his readers. But let Sozomene speak for himself. He says, *the fire met them as they strove to enter* εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν, *into the church* or *temple*. And to know what place he meant by these words, we must

must have recourse to his author, Greg. Nazianzene: Who, in the relation already given at large *, says, that when the Jews had procured the countenance and assistance of Julian to rebuild the temple, they addressed themselves to the undertaking, with great alacrity and vigour; but, being driven from their work by a whirlwind and earthquake, they fled for refuge to a certain neighbouring church, ἐπί τι τῶν πλησίον ἱερῶν, apparently a Christian Oratory, built amongst, or adjoining to, the ruins of those sacred places, formerly included within the walls of the temple. This particular, Sozomene takes from Gregory; And what the latter expresses by ἐπι τι τῶν πλησίον ἱερῶν, the other calls εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν, *into the church.* Yet M. Basnage supposes, he meant the *Jewish temple rebuilt.* But perhaps he might be betrayed into this absurd interpretation, from what followed in Gregory; who says, that while they were striving to force their way into this church, a fire ἐκ τῆ ἱερᾷ, met and stopped them. The question is what he here meant by ἱερᾷ; doubtless the same with ἱερῶν, going before, *the Jewish Temple*, near which the Christian Church or Oratory stood. But what *temple?* Not a new one rebuilt, but the old one in ruins: ἐκ τῆ ἱερᾷ signifying the same as ἐκ τῶν θεμελίων τῆ ναῆ, and with elegance; for ἱερὸν is the generic word, and signifies as well the site of a holy building as the building itself. It appears, at least, that Sozomene understood the word ἐκ τῆ ἱερᾷ in this sense, from his making *all* the variation in Gregory's account from the rest, to consist in his assigning a *different time* for the destruction of the workmen; and from his express affirmation, that the

* From pp. 110—112.

witnesses

witnesses all agreed in attesting, that the fire came from the *foundations of the ruined temple.* And it appears, he understood Gregory rightly; who, in his turn, affirms, that the evidence were *unanimous* in attesting the fire came ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν, by which he could mean nothing but the *foundations* of the ruined temple; because it was in that only they were unanimous. Nor, for the same reason, could Gregory mean, nor could Sozomene so understand him, that the fire came from the *church*, into which they were forcing an entrance. And Gregory seems to have well weighed what he says; for in this very place, he carefully distinguishes between uncertain rumour and established evidence.

But, indeed, in every view, the learned critic's interpretation is insupportable. The whole tenor of Gregory's relation, (which is in perfect harmony with the rest) shews that the obstruction began *before* they had laid the foundations.

On the whole, then, we see, *this variation*, concerning the eruption, is as imaginary as the rest.

M. Basnage proceeds; and tells us, there is a *fourth variation*, concerning this miracle of the Fire; which is, that *the Jews confessed, though in spite of themselves, that* JESUS CHRIST *was* GOD; *and yet they did not cease to persevere in their attempt*; *which* (says the Critic) *is a manifest contradiction.*

Though I would not call this *a contradiction*, yet I readily confess it to be a high improbability. However, be it what it will, the Critic alone is to answer for it. In a word, the charge is entirely groundless, not one of them affirming, or intimating, the least word of any such matter; but on the contrary, plainly declaring that this *confession* of the Jews

Jews was not till they had *given up* the enterprize, as desperate.

The words of SOCRATES are these: "The Jews, "seized with extreme affright, were forced, in spite "of themselves, to confess that JESUS CHRIST was "GOD; yet, for all that, they would not *obey his* "*will*; but, as men fast bound in religious prejudices, "still continued in their old superstition. Nor did "a third miracle, which happened afterwards (the "shining crosses) bring them to the true faith *." This historian speaks only of the Jews.

SOZOMENE speaks both of Jews and Gentiles; and in the order here named.—"*Some* (says he) "on the instant, judged that CHRIST was GOD, "and that the restoration of the temple was dis-"pleasing to him: while *others*, not long after, went "over to the church, and were baptized †."

THEODORET, again, speaks only of the Jews; for, after having related the whole series of miracles, the last of which (in the rank he places them) was the crosses on their garments, he goes on in this manner: "The enemies of God seeing these things, and "fearing his hand, now advanced, might fall upon "themselves, fled away, and returned every man to "his place; confessing him to be GOD, whom their "forefathers had affixed to the tree ‡."

* Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ ἐν μεγίστῳ φόβῳ γενόμενοι, καὶ ἄκοντες ὡμολόγων τὸν Χριστὸν Θεὸν λέγοντες οὐκ ἐποίουν δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ θέλημα, ἀλλ' ἔμενον τῇ τοῦ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ προλήψει κρατούμενοι, οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸ τρίτον θαῦμα τὸ ὕστερον ἐπιγενόμενον, εἰς πίστιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἦγεν αὐτούς· σφραγῖδες σταυροῦ ἀκτινοειδεῖς. L. iii. c. 20.

† —τοῖς μὲν αὐτίκα ἐκρίθη Θεὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ μὴ ἀρεσθῆναι τῇ ἀνανεώσει τοῦ ναοῦ, οἱ δὲ, οὐκ εἰς ἀκρὰν προσέθεντο τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐμυήθησαν. L. v. c. 22.

‡ ταῦτα οἱ ἀντίθεοι θεασάμενοι, καὶ τὰς θεηλάτους μάστιγας ὀῤῥωδήσαντες, ἀπέδρασάν τε καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα κατέλαβον, Θεὸν ὁμολογοῦντες τὸν ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων τῷ ξύλῳ προσηλωθέντα. L. iii. c. 20.

Now let the impartial Reader but reflect, that this circumstance of the confession, is related, by each of the historians, as happening *after* all the destructive interpositions, which hindered the work; and he must needs conclude, that M. Basnage has given a false representation of their accounts.

SOCRATES lets us know, in what their obstinacy lay: not in persisting in their project; but persevering in their superstition.

SOZOMENE mentions only their sudden *confession*; and had he not opposed it to the lasting *conversion* of the Gentiles, it must be owned that, from him, we could conclude nothing of their obstinacy: but, as he hath so opposed it, we find his account to be perfectly conformable to the relation of Socrates; and discover even a hint in the words, μὴ ἀρεσθῆναι τῇ ἀνανεώσει τὸν νεὼν, that they did *desist* on their *confession*.

THEODORET is fuller than either of them, and explains what might be, otherwise, thought doubtful in Both. He marks the *obstinacy* of those, who (Sozomene says) *on the instant, concluded that Christ was God:* and the *despair* of those who (Socrates says) *continued in their* obstinacy.

Nothing can be clearer, or more consistent than this whole account of their behaviour. Yet M. Basnage assures us, "They are represented as confessing CHRIST, and at the same time persisting in their attempt." It would be hard to think it a designed misrepresentation: and still harder to conceive how he could fall into an involuntary error, in a case so evident, unless we suppose he mistook the sense of Socrates' expression, οὐκ ἐποίουν δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ θέλημα—*they did not obey his will:* as if it meant, they were not *obsequious to this declaration of his will*

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in the prodigies; whereas θέλημα is here used in the common theologic sense, of the *whole will of Christ*: as appears from what follows, which, by necessary construction, is explanative of what went before —ἀλλ' ἐμένον τῇ τῶ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΣΜΟΥ προλήψει κρατέμενοι, ἀδὲ γὰρ τὸ τρίτον θαῦμα τὸ ὕστερον ἐπιγενόμενον εἰς ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ——

But here, perhaps, it may be objected, That even what we ourselves allow these ancient writers to have said, creates a difficulty, which will deserve some solution. "The Jews are represented as confessing the divinity of *Jesus Christ*, and yet persisting in their old superstition: surely a state of mind made up of very discordant principles." It is true, the objection will deserve to be considered: and the rather as it is not impossible but this might be all M. Basnage aimed at; though he missed the mark by a careless expression. However, the objection is so obvious; and the account has, at first sight, so much seeming incongruity, that, I conclude, these Historians were well assured of their fact, before they would venture to trust it to the public judgment. And, when it comes to be examined, I persuade myself, *the reason of things* will give *us* the same satisfaction in its truth, which *concurrent evidence* gave *them*.

If we admit these prodigies to have happened, in the manner they are related, we cannot but conclude, that those, against whom they were directed, how hardened and determined soever, must be seized with sudden astonishment and affright. Now, in this state, the mind, hurried from its basis, catches at any thing which promises protection. Nothing therefore was so natural as their applying to the object *offended*; which, at that moment, could be thought no other than *Jesus of Nazareth*. His power, then,

would, in spite of all old impressions, be instantaneously acknowledged. This is what Socrates means, and well expresses, by saying, that, *in their extreme fright, they were forced, in spite of themselves, to confess that Jesus Christ was God.*

So far every thing was just as the working of human nature would be, when not hindered by any foreign impression.

But they must know nothing of its workings, who can imagine, that new and contrary directions, produced by such accidents, in minds warped by the strong attraction of inveterate prejudices, and hardened by a national obstinacy, could be regular or lasting. When the fright was over, the mind would return mechanically to its old station; and there it would rest, especially if it could find, or even invent for its support, any solution of the phænomena consistent with their former sentiments concerning Jesus: and these, we shall see hereafter, they might, and did invent. So that now we are ready for the concluding part of the account, which Socrates hath given us of this matter.—*Yet for all that, they would not obey his will, but, as men fast bound in religious prejudices, still continued in their old superstition.* He talks, we see, like one who understood what he said; That their hasty *confession* was owing to their sudden *fright*; and their fixed *impiety*, to their inveterate *habits*. All here is so much in order, that the contrary had been the unnatural thing. Had they told us, either that the Jews were *not* frightened into a *confession*; or that they *were* frightened into a *conversion*; the fact had been equally incredible; because, the first case implied the absence of *passions*; and the latter, a freedom from *prejudices*; neither of which agreed with them, as *men* or as *Jews*.

But they relate, what was perfectly consistent with *both*, that their stubborn metal was softened in the flames, and grew hard again as these abated. And have we not many examples of the like behaviour in more modern reprobates, who are in the other extreme of believing nothing? What sentiments of religion did we not hear on a late occasion of terror, where they were never heard before? But what symptoms of sobriety remained, when the danger was supposed to be over! The offended Deity, which they then saw dressed in terrors, was afterwards laughed at, as the phantom of a frightened imagination: and that good prelate, who was then so much reverenced for his pastoral care in warning them of the danger of falling under the justice of an offended God, was soon after pursued with a torrent of abuse, as an evil citizen, who maliciously projected to fright them out of their wits. Now, if *Free-thinking* can thus keep its hold, when it hath nothing to rely on but the mere vanity of its profession; what must we think of *superstition*, which hath a thousand fanciful resources to support men in an old habit?

We come now to what M. Basnage calls the *third miracle*. And, concerning this, he reckons up as many *variations* as in that which went before. But it will be proper first to see how he represents the miracle itself. His words are these,—*their obstinacy gave occasion to a third miracle. For, in the morning, they perceived a great number of shining* STARS *scattered over their habits.* His authority for calling these marks, *stars*, is Sozomene: who, indeed, gives them that name: but, as I conceive, very erroneously; by mistaking the sense of Gregory Nazianzene, whom he

here follows*. Gregory's words are, καλάςερος ὢν; which Billius translates, *stellatus nimirum ipse notisque distinctus*; following the interpretation of Sozomene, who calls them downright *stars*, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ ΑΣΤΡΑΣΙ πεποικιλμένα τὰ ἐσθήματα εἶχον. But I apprehend, that Gregory meant no more by καλάςερος, than that the mark had a star-like *radiance*; not a star-like *figure*. And my reasons are, 1. Because he had just before affirmed, that these marks were *crosses*; and, proceeding in his relation, he acquaints us with their *quality*, that they were καλάςεροι, or *shining*. A circumstance that would first catch the observation; though, as we have shewn †, it may be naturally accounted for. He uses the same term to express the shining feathers in a peacock's train—τὸ πτερὸν κυκλοτερῶς περιςήσας τὸ χρυσαιγὲς καὶ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΕΡΟΝ ‡.—2. Socrates, if he borrowed from Gregory, gives this sense to his words; or, if he did not borrow from him, at least he teaches us how to understand him. His expression is σφραγῖδες ςαυρῶ ΑΚΤΙΝΟΕΙΔΕΙΣ, *shining impressions of the cross*. They were like *stars* in *radiance*, but in *figure* they were *crosses*. Nor do Rufinus, Theodoret, or Cassiodorus, who all remember the *crosses*, speak one word of *stars*; no, not even Theophanes, who studied them well; and seems to have had the manufacturing of a spurious sort, in imitation of them.

Thus much was proper to be said: For, though this difference of figure does not in the least affect

* It appears he followed Nazianzene from what he further observes of their elegant form:—ὡς ἀπὸ ἰςουργικῆς περινοίας κατεςιγμένα. Soz.—πάσης ἰςουργικῆς ψηφῖδος, ἢ περιεργοῦ ζωγραφίας ποικιλότερον ἐκ τούτου τί γίνεται. Naz.

† See p. 120, & seq. ‡ Orat. xxxiv.

our

our reasoning on its *physical* cause, yet it much impairs its *moral* meaning as a symbolic mark. Which, as Sozomene could not but see, it shews his honesty at least, in not concealing a mistaken circumstance, though it took off from the awful significancy of the impression.

With our Critic's leave, therefore, we will call them CROSSES. And now let us see what he hath to object to them.

He preludes his reflections with this oblique remark, *These shining stars they tried to efface, but in vain.* This is said to insinuate discredit on the fact, by an accession of the wonderful. But we have shewn, that the difficulty of washing them out was a natural effect of their shining quality*; at least, a property they had in common with other the like appearances in later times †. So that this will stand no longer in our way.

He comes to his *variations*, by which, as we observed before, he sometimes means *additions*; sometimes *differences*; and sometimes, again, *contradictions.*

The *first* is the lowest species of a *variation*, that is to say, an *addition.*—Sozomene adds, *there were of these stars so artfully formed, that the hand of a workman could not have done them better.* Sozomene, as we observed, borrowed this particular from Gregory. And if Socrates and Theodoret omit it, it was not because they were ignorant of it; much less because they did not believe it. However, such who know that nature frequently casts the mixed substances, produced by fermentation, into regular figures, and often, with that elegance of design which art can but lamely imitate, will have no reason to doubt of the

* P. 121. † P. 125, 126.

truth of this circumstance, after it hath been shewn*, that the marks were entirely *meteoric*.

The *second* variation is, that Theodoret *deviates a little here; for, instead of the shining stars, he speaks of black ones. Such as indeed more properly marked the crime and punishment of the Jews.* These last words are slyly added to recommend the ingenious turn of Theodoret's *addition:* and to shew his Reader, that the *Father* knew how to invent with judgment. But to leave his justification to the nature of the fact, which we are just coming to, when we have observed; that M. Basnage should here have changed his language, and used *crosses* instead of *stars*; for Theodoret does not intimate a syllable about *stars*. It is true, then, he does indeed say, that the crosses on the garments of the Jews were of a dark colour—ἐκ μελαίνης χροιᾶς—We have seen, that the matter of these crosses was of the nature of the Phosphorus, whose property it is to shine by night, and to be dark-coloured by day†. Now if one Writer were to describe their appearance by night, and another their appearance by day, Must not This say, they were *radiant and shining*; and That, that they were *dark coloured?* And so much for his *second variation*.

The *third* is, that Theodoret, AT THE SAME TIME, *crushes to death a great number who were fast asleep under a portico.* The force of this objection, such as it hath, lies in the *time*. For as to the *fall* of the portico, Rufinus and Sozomene concur with Theodoret. But it is by no means true, that Theodoret says, it was at *the same time*. If we suppose that he observes order in this incident, we must conclude the *fall* happened *before*. For the series of his relation stands thus—a portico fell by night—on the same night,

* P. 120. † See p. 120, & seq.

and

and on the following, a cross in the sky—then the crosses on the garments *. The truth is, the fall of this portico had a very sufficient cause. Sozomene plainly intimates, and Rufinus expressly says, it was thrown down by the *first* earthquake which *preceded* the fiery eruption †.

We come now to what the learned Critic calls the *great variation of all.*

Which, he says, *turns upon the effect of the third miracle. For one assures us, that the Jews returned home as hardened as if they had seen nothing: whereas the other two pretend, that the greater part embraced the Christian faith. And that the news of their conversion reached even to the ears of the Emperor Julian himself.*

This, I confess, is to the purpose; and, were it true, would be a considerable objection to the credit of their evidence. But the contradiction charged upon them is groundless and imaginary. He who (our Critic says) *assures us, that the Jews returned home, as hardened as if they had seen nothing*, is Socrates; whose words are these: "The Jews, seized with a "horrible consternation, were forced, in spite of "themselves, to confess that JESUS CHRIST was "GOD. Yet for all that, they would not obey his "will. But, as men fast bound in religious preju-"dices, still continued in their old superstition: nor "did a third miracle, which happened afterwards, "bring them to the true faith—They were hardened, "therefore, according to the saying of the apostle,

* καὶ κύκλῳ ἔν τινι Στοᾷ—κατὰ δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ αὖ πάλιν τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ ὤφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ—καὶ αὐτὰ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐσθήματα. L. iii. c. 20.

† See pp. 129—131.

"and

"and cast away the good which was then laid before "them *."

This, without doubt, is a plain assertion that the gross body of the Jews concerned in this attempt returned home religionless as they came; without either their *temple*, or any holier worship. So far, therefore, is allowed; and he hath it to make his best of; which, we see, he is willing enough to do; for he takes notice, that the other two historians, Sozomene and Theodoret, contradict Socrates, and *pretend, that the greater part embraced the Christian faith.*

This then is the point to be examined. But let me previously observe, 1. That both Jews and Gentiles joined in the attempt to rebuild the temple; and had both of them the stigma of the cross upon their garments, as Gregory Nazianzene and Rufinus inform us †. Nay, from Gregory we learn, it was impressed on the habits of such of the *believers*, likewise, as were present. And, indeed, but for this circumstance, the false miracle of Theophanes had never been invented, or at least had been differently fashioned: for he covers the very church-books and sacred vestments with crosses. And, what is chiefly worth observing is, that this falling of the crosses *indifferently* on all parties present, confirms the physical account we have given of their nature. 2. My second observation is,

* Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ ἐν μεγίστῳ φόβῳ γενόμενοι, καὶ ἄκοντες ὡμολόγουν τὸν Χριστὸν Θεὸν λέγοντες. οὐκ ἐποίουν δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ θέλημα, ἀλλ' ἔμενον τῇ τοῦ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ προλήψει κρατούμενοι· οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸ τρίτον θαῦμα τὸ ὕστερον ἐπιγενόμενον, εἰς πίστιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἦγεν αὐτούς.—πεπώρωντο οὖν κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολον, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντες ἔρριπτον. Socr. L. iii. c. 20.

† ἐπιδειξάτωσαν ἔτι καὶ νῦν τὰ ἐσθῆτας, οἱ τοῦ θαύματος ἐκείνου θεαταὶ καὶ μύσται—ὁμοῦ τε γὰρ ταῦτα διηγεῖτό τις, εἴτ' οὖν τῶν ἡμετέρων, εἴτ' οὖν τῶν ξένων—Naz. Orat. ix.—In sequenti nocte in vestimentis omnium signaculum crucis. Ruf. L. x. c. 37.

That

That as Socrates records the effect of this miracle on the Jews, so Gregory Nazianzene records the effect of it on the Gentiles: For this Father having insulted and triumphed over their Mathematicians and Astronomers on the subject of the aërial Cross; goes on to speak of *that* upon the habits of the persons present; and concludes his account in this manner: *So great was the astonishment of the spectators, that almost all of them, as at a common sign, with one voice invoked for mercy the God of the Christians, and strove to render him propitious with hymns and supplications. And many of them, without procrastinating, but, at the very time these things happened, addressing themselves to our priests with earnest prayers, were admitted into the bosom of the church**, &c. Where we may observe the different language of Nazianzene on this occasion speaking of the Gentiles, from that of Socrates, who spoke of the Jews. The first says, τὸν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀνακαλεῖσθαι Θεὸν; the other, ἄκοντες ὡμολόγεν τὸν Χριστὸν Θεὸν κέκτηνται. The Gentiles implored the protection of the great *God of Heaven*, whom they had before *neglected:* the Jews were forced to own *that Christ* to be God, whom they had before *rejected.*

This being premised, we come now to Sozomene and Theodoret; who, our learned Critic affirms, have contradicted Socrates, in *pretending that the greater part embraced the Christian faith.*

I will give the passage of Sozomene entire. *After these things* [namely the earthquake and fiery erup-

* Τοσαύτη τῶν ὁρωμένων καθάπληξις, ὡς μικρᾷ μὲν ἅπασας ὥσπερ ἐξ ἑνὸς ζυνθήματος ἡ μιᾶς φωνῆς, τὸν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀνακαλεῖσθαι Θεὸν, εὐφημίαις τε πολλαῖς καὶ ἱκεσίαις αὐτὸν ἐξιλάσκεσθαι· πολλοὺς δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἀναβολῆς, ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτὰ τῶν ζυμβαίνων παραδραμόντας τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἱερεῦσιν ἐμοὶ, καὶ πολλὰ καθαιρεθέντας τῆς τε ἐκκλησίας γενέσθαι μέρος, &c. Orat. ix.

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tion) *another miracle happened, more illustrious and wonderful than the foregoing: for, on a sudden, and without human agency, every man's habit was impressed with the sign of the Cross.—The consequence of this was, that some, on the instant, concluded Christ to be God, and that the restoration of the temple was displeasing to him. While others, not long after, went over to the Church and were baptized; and by hymns and supplications, in behalf of the guilty, endeavoured to appease the wrath of the Son of God**.

As evident as it certainly is that Socrates spoke only of the Jews; and Gregory Nazianzene only of the Gentiles; so certain is it, that Sozomene, who took from both of them, speaks *both of Jews and Gentiles*.

He says, *every man's habit was marked with a Cross.* That is, as Greg. Naz. had said before, every man indifferently, whether Jew or Gentile. He then mentions the *consequence* of this prodigy, not on the Jews only, but on the Gentiles; ἐκ τούτου δὲ—And as it was reasonable to expect it would have a different effect on these different bigots; he *first* speaks of what it had upon the Jews, that, *on the instant, they confessed Christ to be God.* This is no more than Socrates had said. They only differ in the manner of telling: For while Socrates goes on to inform us, in express words, that the confession was not *lasting*, and that they presently fell back into their old superstition; Sozomene contents himself to *lead* his reader to the same conclusion, by opposing this sudden flash

* Ἐπὶ τούτῳ δὲ καὶ ἄλλο ξυνεπέβη, τοῦ προτέρου ζαφέστερόν τι καὶ παραδοξότερον· αὐτομάτως γὰρ πάλιν ἡ ἰσθὴς τῷ σημείῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ κατεσημάνθη —ἐκ τούτου δὲ, τοῖς μὲν αὐτίκα ἐπέβη θεὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ μὴ ἀρέσθῆναι τῇ ἀνακτήσει τοῦ ναοῦ· οἱ δὲ, οὐ πολὺ προσέθεντο τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ βαπτισθησαν· καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ λιταῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν τετολμηκότων αὐτοῖς, τὸν Χριστὸν ἐλάσκοντο. Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 22.

of

of *conviction*, to the real and lasting *conversion* of the Pagans, as he found it recorded by Gregory. *Others* (says he) *not long after went over to the church, &c.* From hence it appears, that Sozomene is so far from contradicting Socrates, on this article, that he lends him all the support a concurrent testimony can afford.

THEODORET comes next. And him too the learned Critic hath involved in the same charge of contradiction; but with much less pretence. For he, like Socrates, speaks only of the Jews; and, in such a manner too, as if he had Socrates all the way in his eye. The whole of what he says is to this effect: *The very garments also of the Jews were filled with crosses—which these enemies of God seeing, and fearing that his hand, now exerted, might fall upon themselves, fled away, and returned every man to his place, confessing him to be God, whom their forefathers affixed to the tree* *.

And now, what is there that can countenance M. Basnage in saying, that *Theodoret pretends the greater part embraced the Christian faith?* Is not the *confession* he records the very same with that which, Socrates tells us, so soon passed away in their returning infidelity, insinuated in the very words, τὰ οἰκεῖα κατέλαβον? We conclude, therefore, against the learned Critic's objection, that, in this article, there is a perfect harmony amongst the three historians.

But it will be said perhaps that, in clearing away this objection, I make room for another, that may prove more stubborn, and difficult to remove. "For

* Καὶ αὐτὰ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἱσθήματα γαυρῶν ἐπεπλήρωτο, ταῦτα οἱ ἀλιθιοι θεασάμενοι, καὶ τὰς θεηλάτους μάστιγας ὀρρωδήσαντες, ἀπέδρασάν τε καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα κατέλαβον, θεὸν ὁμολογοῦντες τὸν ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων τῷ ξύλῳ προσηλωθέντα. Eccl. Hist. L. iii. cap. 20.

it seems incredible that so illustrious a miracle should have made no impression on the Jews; and yet have had so considerable an effect upon the Gentiles. An objection, which seems to be redoubled upon one who hath affirmed *, that a Jew's conviction of the truth of Christianity must, on his own notions of the *unity*, be necessarily attended with a conversion: while that Polytheistic principle of *intercommunity* did not imply the necessity of a Gentile's conversion under the same conviction."

To this I answer, It is very true, that a miracle performed before a Pagan, and not directly addressed to him, made, for the most part, but a small impression on his religious notions; because that general principle of Paganism hindered him from seeing, that the evident truth of *another* religion necessarily implied the falsehood of his *own*. It was different with the Jew; who, being a worshipper of the true God, must necessarily regard his attestation, by miracle, not simply as an evidence of the truth proposed, but as an obligation upon all men to embrace it. Hence the apostle Paul, who best knew the different geniuses of the two opposed Religions, says, *The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:* Σοφίαν, the religious principles of their philosophy: in the chief of which was the doctrine of *intercommunity*.

Had the Jews therefore considered this miracle at Jerusalem, as *an attestation to the truth of Christianity*, they must have embraced it. And to affirm they did so consider it, and yet not embrace it, would, it must be owned, be saying something strangely incredible. But this was not the case. In their fright they might call out upon *Christ as God*; but when that was over,

* See Divine Legation, Book II. Sect. 6. See also Book V. Sect. 6.

their

their prejudice regained its hold, and drew them back to their ancient superstition; however it could not have kept them there, but that it enabled them to find a purpose, in this miracle, very well consistent with Judaism: and this was *God's anger* at their profaning a work so holy, by consenting to put it under the direction of a Pagan emperor. This would be easily credited by those who had learnt from their sacred Books that an Israelite was struck dead but for stretching out his hand to uphold the falling ARK. When, therefore, they saw and felt these severe marks of His displeasure, To what would they ascribe it, but to their accepting the impure assistance of an impious Gentile to rebuild the house of the Divine presence? For could it be expected (would their leaders now say) when God had denied this honour to the *Man after his own heart*, because his hands were defiled with blood, that he would confer it upon a Pagan, a Warrior, and a declared Enemy to that Dispensation; a zeal for which was David's great merit with the God of Israel? We see, by the passage quoted above * from R. Gedaliah ben Joseph Jechaiah, that some such reasoning as this, which a *Father* † of the church seemed to think did not want its weight, enabled them to own the miracle without blushing. But had they even wanted so plausible an evasion, yet their prejudices would not have suffered them to be nice in a case where the whole of their Religion lay at stake: In such cases, they were not used to be delicate; as appears by a parallel instance, in the

* P. 87.

† St. Chrysostome, speaking of the readiness of the Jews to accept Julian's assistance, says,—Καὶ ἐκ ἠσχύνοντο οἱ μιαροὶ καὶ ἀναίσχυντοι παρὰ ἀνδρὸς ἀσεβοῦς καὶ Ἕλληνος ταῦτα αἰτοῦντες, καὶ τὰς μιαρὰς ἐκείνας χεῖρας καλοῦντες ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἁγίων οἰκοδομήν. Hom. v. adv. Jud.

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bungling solutions they invented to evade the consequences arising from the miracles of Jesus himself. Sometimes they ascribed his power (as the Gospel tells us) to the assistance of the evil dæmon; and sometimes again (as the books of their traditions inform us) to certain spells or charms stolen from the temple of Solomon.

However, though the miracle at Jerusalem was too notorious to be questioned in that age; and so was to be accounted for in the manner we have seen; yet in aftertimes it was thought safer to *deny* it, though still by the *modest* way of an implication. Thus (as we have seen above *) R. David Gans pretends, that the miscarriage in the Persian war prevented the rebuilding their temple—*Nam Cæsar in bello Persico periit.* Another of them invents a very different tale (for falsehood is rarely constant), and pretends that a sly trick of the Samaritans made both the Jews and the Emperor, in their turns, weary of the project. But so foolish a story will hardly bear the telling. However the reader may find it below †. And in this manner too

* P. 73, note.

† In diebus R. Jehosuah Hananiæ filii, mandavit Imperator ut *Templum reædificaretur.* Papus autem, & JULIANUS opiparas mensas præponunt Judæis à captivitate advenientibus (ad opus adjuvandum) ab Hako ad Antiochiam. Cutei vero seu Samaritani Imperatori asserunt, quod si Hierusalem restauretur, Judæos a contribuendis vectigalibus cessaturos, indeque ab illo defecturos; quibus Imperator: Quomodo inquit, licet mihi ab incepto recedere post mandati promulgationem? Ad quod Samaritani, Domine, inquiunt, præcipe ergo, ut locum prioris Templi mutent, vel ut augeatur aut diminuatur in longitudine vel latitudine circa quinque cubitos, itaque, nullo cogente, opus destituent. Huic sententiæ acquievit Imperator; atque juxta eam, novum misit Judæis mandatum in valle *Bet-Rimon* aggregatis, quo audito, in magnum prorumpunt fletum, indeque furore perciti de defectione loquuntur; sed Magnates defectionis consequentiis valde perterriti, implorant

* prædicto

too they treated the miracles of Jesus: for though, at first, they only tried to evade their force; they ventured at length to deny their reality.

On the whole, then, we see, That the inveterate *prejudices* of the Jews; their *obstinacy* in the wrong; and their *aversion* to the Christian name, would hinder a miracle from having its proper effect upon them, could they but contrive either to put it to the support of their own superstitions, or, at least, to turn it from the condemnation of them. We see, the miracle in question might be thus evaded. Who then can doubt but they would evade it? The consequence was, their continuance in error. The Christian writers tell us they did so continue. And we now find, They say nothing but what is very probable.

The contrary effect of this miracle on *Paganism* is as easily understood. For though the principle of *intercommunity* supported a Gentile against the power of miracles at large; yet when he found one of them levelled at himself, as its direct object, the case would be altered. He would then feel the point in question brought home to him; and the circumstances of affright and desolation (if, as here, the miracle was attended with any such) would keep off prejudice till reason had passed a fair judgment. The Jews and Gentiles joined

a prædicto R. Jehosuah, ut populum alloquatur, eumque ad pacem adducere conetur, quod fecit sequenti fabula. Leo a frustulo ossis in ejus gutture infixo admodum afflictus, magnam spondet mercedem cuicumque molestum os ab ejus gutture averruncaret. Accedit Grus, os averruncat, & mercedem petit. Cui Leo, Jacta te ipsum, inquit, quod ingressus es in Leonis os in pace, & egressus es in pace. Sic, fratres, sufficit ut ingressi simus sub hujus gentis potestate in pace, & egrediamur in pace. Hæc sunt Beresit-Raba verba fideliter translata, ex fine cap. 64. Hoc accidit anno ab orbe condito circa 4833, secundum R. David Gans in ejus Zemah David.

joined cordially in this project. The prime motive of the Jews was a *fond* desire to be restored to their country and religion; but that of the Gentiles, a *malicious* purpose to give the lie to Revelation. And, without doubt, the moral *impression* on the defeat would be relative to the *motive* of the attempt. They thought to dishonour the holy faith; and they added new credit to it. So that a *consciousness* of their intentions would add proportionable *facility* to their conversion. The Jewish evasion would not serve *their* purpose. At most, it could only make them waver between the *Church* and the *Synagogue*; a state of no long continuance. Sozomene assures us it was soon over; *In a little time* (says he) ἐκ τῆς μακρὰν, *they went over to the Church, and were baptized.*

But, before we leave this subject, it may be proper to observe, That *general* expressions, relative to parties, and bodies of men, are not to be understood *universally*. Thus when the Historians tell us, *all* were marked with the cross, They do not mean *every individual* present; but all indifferently, of every denomination. So again, when they say, the *Pagans* were converted, and the Jews remained hardened, They do not mean every particular man; but the far greater number in either party. And thus St. Chrysostome directs us to understand it, where he says, *that the Jews, for the most part, remained hardened* *.

It is scarce worth while to take notice, that what M. Basnage affirms (of Sozomene and Theodoret's saying, *That the news of the Jews' conversion reached even the ears of the emperor Julian himself*), is as mistaken as the rest. For Sozomene says nothing of the matter: and as to Theodoret, his words are as follows: *These things came to the ears of Julian, for they were cried*

* Tom. V. Orat. xlv.

up,

*up, and in the mouths of all men; but his heart was hardened like Pharaoh's**: where we see, by ταῦτα he means the miracles. For it was not the *conversion*, which was in the mouths of all men, but the *miracles*. And Julian's resisting these, was what made his case like Pharaoh's.

Our critic, having now well canvassed the *evidence*, tells us for what purpose he hath given himself this trouble; *It was to supply those sober persons, who do not believe the miracle, with arguments to fortify their doubts.* But as if something was still wanting to so good an end, he resumes his task, and says, he *will add two observations* more.

The *first* is, That *the argument Sozomene brings, to prove the truth of what he advances, is a very weak one. He appeals to the issue; and maintains, we can no longer doubt of this long train of miracles since the temple was never finished. But* (says the critic) *has the historian forgot that the Jews did not obtain their permission till the time of Julian's setting out for his Persian expedition, in which he perished? There was then little need for all these miracles, to hinder the erection of a building. Surely a sufficient cause of cutting short an enterprise of this nature might be found in the opposition of the Christians, who might take advantage of the Prince's absence in a remote region, his death there, and the advancement of Jovian to the Empire, who had an aversion for the Jews. Besides, the historian refers his readers in a vague indefinite manner to the eye-witnesses of the fact, without pointing out one single person by name.*

Here are many things asserted, that will deserve to be examined.

* Ταῦτα ἦσαν μὲν Ἰουλιανὸς, παρὰ πάλαι γὰρ ἦλθε· τῷ δὲ Φαραὼ παρεπλήσιος τὴν καρδίαν ἐσκλήρυνεν. L. iii. c. 20.

1. He misrepresents the matter, in saying that Sozomene gives the unbuilt temple as a proof of its being obstructed by a miracle. To such reasoning, I own, M. Basnage's observation of *Julian's absence and death, &c.* had been a good reply. But Sozomene's argument stands thus: "The yielding up the place, and leaving the work imperfect, ἡμιτελῆ τὸ ἔργον καταλιπόντες, is a proof of the miraculous interposition." Now, it is one thing to *see a work* unfinished; and another, to *know who* left it in that condition. From the first (which is as M. Basnage represents it) Sozomene's conclusion would not hold; from the latter (which is as Sozomene himself puts it) his conclusion may be very fairly drawn. But to this it may be objected, "That, at the time Sozomene made this observation, the two different representations amounted to one and the same thing; because all that the reader could see, was a *work unfinished*; and, for the rest, he had only the historian's word." This our adversaries will allow to be fairly put. But they are not aware, that when Sozomene wrote, the face of things, upon the place, was such as was sufficient to convince his readers that the Jews and Gentiles were forcibly driven from their work; namely, the marks of a desolating earthquake, and a consuming fire. Chrysostome tells us, these existed when he wrote; and it would be absurd to think that such kind of marks could be obliterated so soon after.

Thus far in defence of the historian's argument, falsely represented by the critic. I proceed to consider the false fact, which the critic has advanced, in support of his false representation. He says, *that the Jews did not obtain their permission to rebuild the temple, till the time Julian set out for his*

Persian expedition. This he grounds on the words of Socrates, Κελεύει τόχ& κλιζέσθαι τὸν Σολομῶν& ναόν· αὐτὸς ἐπὶ Πέρσας ἤλαυνε. Which the Latin translator renders, *Solomonis templum protinus instaurari jubet. Ipse interim ad bellum contra Persas proficiscitur.* But ἐπὶ Πέρσας ἤλαυνε does not signify he forthwith began his march, as if it had been ἐπὶ Πέρσας πορεύεσθαι; but that he began the war against them, by putting every thing in a hostile motion; which he might do while he staid at Antioch. And Amm. Marcellinus, who was, at that time, with Julian, and of his court, tells us, that the eruption which put an end to the project, happened before his master left Antioch.

But the critic's *inference* from this will deserve a more particular consideration—*so that there was little need of all these miracles to hinder the erection of a single building. Surely a sufficient cause for cutting short an enterprise of this nature may be found in the opposition of the Christians, who might take advantage of the prince's absence in a remote region, of his death there, and the advancement of Jovian, who was an enemy to the Jews.*

Here are two things reprehensible in this inference, 1. A *false state of the case*; 2. and a *groundless insinuation.*

1. He speaks as if these miracles were worked only to hinder the simple erection of a building for superstitious worship; the error of Ambrose, taken notice of above. Whereas there was much more in the affair. Its erection would have contradicted the prophecies, and opposed the declared nature of the gospel dispensation. In the first case, there seemed

no sufficient reason to interfere; in the latter, an interposition was necessary.

2. He *insinuates*, that the real obstruction came from the Christians in Julian's absence;—from his unexpected death;—and from the succession of a Christian to the empire. This, we see, is only his opinion; I think differently: and had I nothing but my conjectures to oppose to *his*, here I would leave it: but, without betraying the cause I have undertaken, I cannot omit to remind the reader, that the critic's *insinuation* is utterly discredited by the concurrent testimony of two unexceptionable witnesses, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Julian himself: from both of whom * we learn, that the affair of the temple-project was all over before the Emperor removed from Antioch.

But there is still something behind the curtain: which, either prudence or modesty, made the critic backward to subject to the abuse of every licentious reader. But I am always for letting truth be trusted with itself: therefore, to disguise nothing, I would observe, that one of the strongest objections to the miracle seems here to be obscurely insinuated. Whether he saw it in its full force may be doubted. However, here it is: and the reader shall have no reason to complain that it does not come with its best foot forward. I will suppose then M. Basnage to make the following objection:

"That, admitting the re edification of the temple was both contrary to the words of the old prophecies, and to the nature of the new dispensation; yet, as the projector of this affront upon religion was sud-

* See pp. 67, 68. 77. & seq.

denly

denly cut off, and succeeded by a Christian Emperor, before any considerable progress could be made, there was no need of a miracle to defeat the attempt; and God is not wont to make a needless waste of miracles."

The objection, we see, is specious, and, at first view, will be apt to impose upon us. But let us weigh its real value.

The case is agreed to be this: the two inveterate enemies of the Christian name conspire together, though with different views, to blast its credit, and dishonour its pretensions; and this, in a point so essential, that the religion itself must stand or fall with the issue of the event.

They put their design in execution. The materials are collected, the workmen assembled, the foundations laid, and the superstructure now advances without stop or impediment. In a word, every thing succeeds to their wishes. When, on a sudden, one of the most common accidents in the world blasts the whole project; a giddy headstrong prince* perishes in a rash adventure against a fierce and subtle enemy.

In this case, what would the world have thought; the world, which never thinks favourably of religious novelties; and which this bold defiance of the power of Christ had set at gaze, and made impatient for the event †? Would it not have said, that Christianity

* The temper and character of this prince was so well known, that, when he consulted the Gods about his face, the priests were in no danger of discrediting their oracles by a mistaken conjecture. They told him he should die a violent death. This he himself informs us of in his last harangue to his friends.—Nec fateri pudebit, interiturum me ferro dudum dudici fide fatidica præcinente. Amm. Mar. l. xxv. c. 3.

† See pp. 90, 91.

was beholden to a mere accident; while the power, that should have supported it, was not at hand to vindicate its credit and reputation? And it was well if they had said no more. For the popular story, which the malice of the Pagans, and the indiscretion of some Christians, had set agoing, *that Julian was assassinated by a Christian soldier*, would, in that case, have been enough to raise suspicions that the *faith* had been propagated, at first, by as indirect means as it was now supported.

The Jews had twice before projected the restoration of their *temple-worship:* once under Hadrian; and once again, under Constantine. At those junctures the attempt had none of this malice and formed impiety against the divinity of our holy faith. The Gentiles then gave the Jews no assistance or support: and it was in them a simple, natural desire of returning to their own land, and of re-establishing their country-rites. But still, it being contrary to God's religious economy, the design was defeated by the *policy* of Hadrian, and the *zeal* of Constantine; and these *civil* impediments were sufficient to cover the honour of religion. For, in these two instances, God's transaction was only with his church. He promised to support it to the end of time, and he equally performs his promise, whether that protection be conveyed by the mortal instruments with which he works in the course of his general providence, and whose blindness is guided by his all-seeing eye; or whether it be immediately afforded by the sudden arrest and new direction of nature, irresistibly impelled by his all-powerful hand.

But the case was different in the affair before us. Here God had a controversy with his enemies. His power was defied, his protection scorned, and his Godhead

Godhead dared and challenged to interpose between them and his servants. At this important juncture, to let a natural event decide the quarrel; and to urge *that* as a proof of his victory, would be taking for granted the thing in question. For the affair was not with his friends, who believed his superintendency; but with his enemies, who laughed at and despised it. Not to shew himself, on this occasion, in all the terror of offended majesty, must have exposed his religion to the same contempt as if the very pinnacles of the new-projected temple had been completed.

But this is not all. A PROPHECY, such as this, concerning the *final* destruction of the temple, is of the nature of a PROHIBITORY LAW. For God's *foretelling* a thing *should never be*, contains in it a *prohibition* to do it: because that information is founded in *his own* will, or command; not in the will or command of *another*: therefore that *will* binds all, to whose knowledge it arrives. This law came to the knowledge of our projectors, as appears from their very impiety in defying it *. But it is of the nature and essence of *Law*, to have penal sanctions. Without them, all laws are vain; especially *prohibitory laws*. Now these transgressors were as culpable in beginning the foundations, as they could have been had they lived to finish their work. Therefore to see them escape punishment, and safely and quietly go off when the change of times forbad them to proceed (a

* Πάντα δὲ τὰ ἄλλα δεύτερα ἦν τοῦ ποιουμένου, βασιλεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἕλλησι, καὶ πᾶσιν Ἰουδαίοις· οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὔτε Ἰουδαίοις συνοῦντες, ἐκοινώνουν, αὐτοῖς τῆς σπουδῆς, ὑπολαβόντες, δύνασθαι καταρθοῦν τὸ ἐρχείρημα, καὶ ψευδεῖς ἀπελέγξαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰς προῤῥήσεις. οἱ δὲ, ἅμα τοῦτο διενοοῦντο, καὶ καιρὸν ἔχειν ᾤοντο ἀναστῆσαι τὸ ἱερόν.—τὴν δεσποτικὴν ὑπολαμβάνων ὁ Μάταιος προῤῥήσιν διελέγχειν. Theod. l. iii. c. 20. Sozom. l. v. c. 22.

change,

change, which had nothing in it more wonderful than the death of a rash adventurer in battle) must have argued, that God was no more concerned in the issue of this, than of all other natural events; and consequently, that these *boasted prophecies*, and this *pretended gospel*, were the inventions of men. I believe modern infidels would scarce have spared us, had they taken church-history at this advantage.

But now, by a timely interposition, the honour of religion was secured: And, an exemplary punishment being inflicted, the reverence of his laws, the credit of his messengers, and the regal dignity of his Son, were all amply vindicated.

While I am upon this subject, let me observe, what, perhaps, I might have found a better place for, that the forbearance of Jovian and Valentinian to revenge, on those forward creatures in power, the insults and injuries offered on this occasion to many peaceable and honest men, is no slight proof of the reality of a miraculous interposition. For it shewed the church fully satisfied that God had avenged his own cause. Gregory Nazianzene ends his *Discourse against Julian* with an excellent persuasive to forgiveness; wherein he exhorts the Christians to sacrifice their resentments, as a *Thank-offering*, to God: ἐνσπένδωμεν (says he) τῷ Θεῷ χαριστήριον.

Thus having set this objection in the best light we were able, both for the honour of religion, and the credit of M. Basnage's criticism; and seen to what it amounts: we leave it to the reader to make his conclusions on the general question.

M. Basnage goes on in these words,—*Besides, the historian* [Sozomene] *refers his readers in a vague indefinite manner to the eye-witnesses of the fact, without pointing out one single person by name.*

Objectors

Objectors are often too careless where their random reflections will light. This will fall upon the Apostle's narrative as well as our historian's. St. Paul, arguing against some who denied the Resurrection from the dead, confutes them by the Resurrection of Jesus; who was *seen*, after he was risen, *of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom* (says he, without specifying any one by name) *the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep* *.

Sozomene writes a general history of the church, for the use of the whole Christian world: and speaking, in its place, of the event at Jerusalem, he concludes his account in this manner: *Should these things seem incredible to any one, those who have had their information from eye-witnesses, and are yet alive, will confirm it to him* †. Of which number, if he himself was not one; yet, at least, he had his account from one. In either case, this was proper satisfaction to a doubter. And it had been impertinent to add, that "amongst these were John, Thomas or Andrew of Jerusalem;" obscure names, which would have given his reader no more satisfaction, than what his general information had conveyed before. But it may be said, that St. Paul, besides his *vague* account of *five hundred*, adds the names of Cephas, James, and himself. And so, doubtless, would Sozomene have done, had he either seen it himself, or known any that had, with whose names his reader was as well acquainted, as the Corinthians were with Cephas, James, and the *rest of the Twelve*. What he hath done was what common sense dictated he should do. But M. Basnage seems to expect in a general history all the circumstance and precision of a *procés-verbal*.

* 1 Cor. xv. 6.

† Ταῦτα ὅτῳ πιστὰ οὐ καταφαίνεται, πιστούσθωσαν οἱ παρὰ τῶν θεασαμένων ἀκηκοότες ἔτι τῷ βίῳ περιόντες. l. v. c. 22.

However,

However, thus much we learn from these *vague* words of Sozomene, that he was not a mere copier; but, to verify his story, went as nigh the fountain-head as he could get. And this being the practice of these three honest and judicious historians, we need not wonder that *one* should mention *this* incident, and *another*, *that*, just as they received their information from the most credible of the *first ear-witnesses* they could find then alive: which too, by the way, is sufficient to take off all M. Basnage urges on the head of *variations*. But had we taken his VARIATIONS from him, what were he then? An artist without the proper tool of his trade; for a *professed objector* never borrowed more than this from the magazine of Quintilian—ARTIFICIS *est invenire in actione adversarii quæ inter semetipsa pugnent, aut* PUGNARE VIDEANTUR.

We are now come to the end of this long piece of criticism, which concludes in these words: *But lastly, Cyril of Jerusalem, who was at that time, Bishop of the place, and must have been upon the spot, since it was he, who, confiding in a prophecy of Daniel (which had foretold, as he thought, that the attempt would prove unsuccessful) encouraged and animated the people to repose their confidence in God. Notwithstanding, this same Cyril hath never taken the least notice of these many miracles: and yet it certainly was not, because he was no friend to miracles: we are told he wrote to Constantine the Younger, to inform him, that he was more happy than his father, under whose empire the Cross of Christ had been found here on earth; since Heaven, to grace his reign, had displayed a more illustrious prodigy: which was a cross much brighter than the Sun, seen in the firmament for a long time together, by the whole city of Jerusalem. Why now was that cross remembered, and all these miracles forgotten?*

forgotten? He assures the Jews they shall see the sign of the cross; and that it will precede the coming of the Son of God; and yet he says not one word of those which had been miraculously affixed on their habits. The silence of a Bishop, who was upon the place, who loved miracles, and laboured for the conversion of the Jews, looks very suspicious; while, at the same time, those who do speak to it lived at a distance.

The supposed fact, as here stated, concerning *Cyril's testimony*, is indeed a material objection to the miracle. What shall we say then? Would not any one conclude that this learned man, a real friend to Revelation, and faithful historian, had weighed it well before he ventured to pronounce upon its consequences, in so public a manner? Who would suspect that he has taken for granted *one* thing, which every body knows to be false; and *another*, which nobody can know to be true?

He takes it for granted, that the works which now remain of *Cyril* were written *after* the event; whereas they were all written *before*. These are the *Catecheses ad competentes*, the *Catecheses mystagogicæ*, and the *Epistle to Constantius*: the two first bear date about 347, and the latter in 351; those, sixteen; this, twelve years *before* the miracle in question. And the worst is, the learned critic could not but know it.

If he had no intention to deceive by this captious insinuation, we must lay the blame on his careless expression; and that his argument from Cyril's silence, when set in the best light, stands thus:

"The pretended miracle at the temple of Jerusalem happened in the year 363. Cyril lived to the year 386, so that we cannot but conclude, he wrote and preached much within that period. He appears to be fond of recording miracles: but he had peculiar reasons to celebrate, and expatiate upon, *this*. It favoured

his charitable zeal for the conversion of the Jews; but, above all, the glory of it reflected much lustre upon himself, as he had predicted the defeat. Had he therefore known it to be true, he must have recorded it. But the silence of antiquity concerning his testimony shews he did not record it. For to whom but to Cyril, the Bishop of the place, and then upon the spot, should the ancient relators of the fact have appealed? Yet he was not forgotten in the crowd: for they tell us of his faith in the *prophecy of Daniel*. We must, therefore, conclude, that the event, whatever it was, had struck the good bishop dumb; and that his silence proceeded from that sort of confusion, which we now-a-days see in the *modester part* of our *Revelation-Prophets*, when some unexpected event between the Turk and the Emperor has disconcerted the scheme they had chalked out for the direction of Divine Providence.

It will hardly be thought, I have not done the argument justice. Let us see then what can be said to it.

1. Whether Cyril left any thing behind him (except what he wrote before the event) is not any where said. Some perhaps may conclude from Jerom, that he wrote nothing after this time: For, in Jerom's catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, the works mentioned above are given as a complete list of what Cyril wrote: and it is scarce to be supposed that any of his writings should have perished between his time and that of Jerom.

2. Cyril might write many things, and yet none relative to this affair; or in which he could properly introduce it.

3. He might have given the history of it in all its circumstances, and yet these three historians (to whom M. Basnage's observation is confined) not been guilty

of

of any neglect in not mentioning his testimony *by name*. Or if it were a neglect, it was the same they committed in passing over two other contemporary writers, Gregory Nazianzene and John Chrysostome; one of whom has spoken fully, and the other frequently to the miracle in question. But to this, perhaps, it may be replied, "That though they have not quoted them, yet they have referred to, and borrowed from them." How does the objector know that?—From the *homilies* of the one, and the *invectives* of the other, now remaining.—Very well: and for aught he knows to the contrary, had any of Cyril's supposed works been remaining, we should have found them quoting from, and referring to him; especially, as they relate several circumstances, mentioned neither by Gregory nor Chrysostome. Had Gregory's works been lost, we had been as unable to know that they borrowed from *him*, as we now are that they borrowed from Cyril.

4. As to their recording the good bishop's prophetic *confidence* in the divine interposition, and at the same time overlooking his testimony to the miracle that followed, a very good reason may be given; and such a one as does honour to their judgment. Cyril was *singular* in the first case; and but *one of many* in the other. They took, therefore, from him what no other could supply: and what was to be found every where (the testimony to the miracle) they left in common to the church.

5. As to the objection, from the circumstance of Cyril's *loving miracles*, let me observe, that if it could be proved from a work of his written after 363, that he had neglected any fair occasion to record the defeat of Julian, the objection would have some weight. But in the total uncertainty whether he did record the story or no, it turns against the objector, as the circumstance

stance of Cyril's *loving miracles* adds prob
the affirmative, that, if he did write at all, ability to
find room for a subject he loved to write upo he would

6. But since the learned critic hath been n.
to speak slightly of this excellent prelate, as if pleased
both fanatical in interpreting prophecies, and he were
in believing miracles; so much will be due bigotted
virtues of a worthy man (how far soever ren to the
time and place), as to vindicate him from unfai oved in
sions; due especially from us, as this justice asper-
character will be seen to reflect credit on the sh to his
took in opposing Julian's attempt. There is nare he
recorded of him, for which every good ma a story
reverence his memory. He had an ecclesiastical n will
ble with Acacius Bishop of Cæsarea, about M squab-
litical jurisdiction. Cyril despised so frivolous etropo-
test; and refused to appear before the Palestine a con-
to which his factious adversary had delated Synod,
Whereon, the Synod agreed to depose Cyril, fo
tempt. But to give their sentence a shew of
against so distinguished a personage, they adde
crime to the other, that once, in a desolating fa
he disposed of the treasures of his church to feed
poor. This action, so becoming a faithful minist
Jesus Christ, fully shews, that, whether he had a
to metropolitical jurisdiction or no, he well dese
it. But the crying part of this sacrilege is yet behi
it seems, that in the sale of his sacred wardrobe,
reverend Stole, interwoven with gold, and made yet
more illustrious by the *sanctity* of its giver, Constantine the Great, came at length, in the ceaseless round of property, into the possession of a notorious prostitute, who flourished with it on the public stage.

M. Basnage concludes his remark on Cyril in this manner: *The silence of a bishop, who was upon the place,*

place, looks very suspicious; while, at the same time, those who do speak to it lived at a distance. Admitting the bishop was indeed silent, How could this learned man, who forms his charge on the information of the three Historians, say, that *those who speak to the miracle lived at a distance*; when Sozomene plainly tells us, that, at the time he wrote, there were several still living, who had it from the eye-witnesses of the fact? Here then, for the silence of *one* man, we have the testimony of *many*.—But Sozomene speaks of none by *name*—Who knows, then, but the bishop might be amongst the *nameless?* It hath been many a bishop's fate. However, *the testimony of the people on the place* is directly *asserted* by the historian; and the *silence* of Cyril only *inferred* by the Critic, from his not finding him amongst the witnesses.

And, with these reflections on the good prelate, so unworthy the learning, the sense, and the ingenuity of M. Basnage, he concludes his OBJECTIONS *against the miracle.*

What follows is to shew his impartiality. "However "(says he) it ought not to be dissembled, that if one "of the Jewish Chronologists maintains, that the "sudden and unexpected death of Julian prevented "the rebuilding the temple; another of them assures "us, it was rebuilt; and that when this was done at "a vast expence, it tumbled down again; and, the "next day, a dreadful fire from heaven melted all the "iron instruments which remained, and destroyed an "innumerable multitude of the Jews. This confession "of the Rabbins is the more considerable, as it re-"flects dishonour on the nation; and these gentry "are not wont to copy from the writings of the "Christians."

Here, it must be owned, he hath approved himself *indifferent;*

indifferent: and if his arguments *against* the miracle be more in *number*, than those *for* it; the *weight*, at least, on both sides is equal.

Not that I would insinuate, as if this Rabbinical testimony was altogether impertinent. I have myself produced it in support of the evidence *: and, principally for the sake of that circumstance, which M. Basnage so ingenuously acknowledges—*That the Rabbins are not wont to copy from Christian writers.*

Nor will I deny, that this testimony hath *its proper place* in a religious *History of the Jews.* What I cannot reconcile to this great man's general character, nor even to that air of impartiality which he here professes to preserve, is, that when he hath brought out all he could invent to the discredit of the miracle, he should content himself with producing only one single circumstance, and that, the least considerable, in its favour. Insomuch that if ever the conclusive testimonies of Ammianus Marcellinus, Gregory Nazianzene, and John Chrysostome, should be lost, and this piece of criticism remain, the silence of so candid and knowing a writer as M. Basnage, will be infinitely a better proof that no such evidence had ever been, than what he himself urges, from the silence of antiquity, against the testimony of Cyril.

But, to end with this learned Critic. There is, I must confess, something so very odd in his conduct on this occasion, as cannot but give offence to every sober Reader. Yet I would by no means be thought to approve of Mr. Lowth's uncharitable reflections: which stand (as they often do amongst worse writers) in the place of a confutation. One may allow M. Basnage to have thought perversely; because this is an infirmity common to believers and unbelievers:

* Pp. 87, 88.

But

But one would never suspect a *Minister of the Gospel* of a formed design to undermine a Religion into whose service he had solemnly entered; nor, a *man, truly learned*, of a bias to infidelity: such dispositions imply gross *knavery* and *ignorance*; and M. Basnage approved himself, on all other occasions, a man of uncommon talents and integrity.

A strong prejudice against the character of the *Fathers* was what, apparently, betrayed him into this unwarrantable conclusion: for, injuriously suspecting them of imposture whenever they speak of miracles, he began with them where he should have ended; and read their accounts, not to examine facts yet in question, but to condemn frauds as already detected. Hence every *variation*, nay, every *variety* in their relations, appeared to him a *contradiction*. And that which indeed supports their joint testimony, was by this learned man imagined to be the very thing that overthrew it. But their best vindication is a strict scrutiny into their evidence *. This we have attempted; not as an advocate for the *Fathers*, but an Inquirer after *Truth*. What hath been the issue must be left to the judgment of the Public.

CHAP. V.

WE go on with the remaining objections to this miracle, in which we shall be more brief.

V. In the next place it is pretended, "That this

* Whoever will take the pains of examining what the Fathers, and particularly Gregory Nazianzene, say of this miracle, and will compare it with their sentiments of the extraordinary reports that went about, concerning Julian's death, will see cause to confess, that they were not so *credulous* or so *designing* as they have been represented.

fiery eruption was an ARTIFICIAL contrivance of the Christians to keep their enemies at a distance. It is said, the Egyptians, from the earliest times, had the secret of mixing combustible materials in such a manner as to produce the effects of exploded gunpowder: That Sir William Temple, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and, an abler man than either of them, Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, have dropt hints as if some of the greatest wonders, both in sacred and profane antiquity, were the effects of this destructive composition: such as the thunders and lightning at the giving the *law* from mount Sinai; the deaths of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, in their contest with Aaron; and the defeat of Brennus and his army of Gauls when they assaulted the temple of Apollo at Delphi. This too, they say, will account for a strong mark of resemblance, between the latter, and the defeat of Julian; in both which the impending destruction was predicted; in the one by Cyril; in the other, by the priests of Apollo *."

The objection, we see, supposes full *power* and *opportunity*, as well as profound address in these Christian engineers: for let them be as knowing as you will, in all the hidden arts of Egypt, yet, if they had not elbow-room for their work, all their skill would come to nothing.

We will examine how they were bestead in each of these particulars. At this important juncture the Christians were unarmed, and defenceless. They were forbidden by law to bear office; and they every where submitted to the imperial decrees. But This, to rebuild the temple, was inforced by all the power and authority of the empire. And the project was

* —In hoc partium certamine repente antistites advenisse Deum clamant, &c. Just. l. xxiv. c. 8.

no sooner on foot, than the place was possessed and crowded with vast numbers of Jews and Gentiles. Nor was this all. The Christians were driven from the neighbourhood of the holy place, by their just fears and apprehensions. They had every thing to expect from this impious combination. For their enemies of both parties came in crowds to share and enjoy the approaching triumph; while each strove which should exceed the other in violence and outrage. Insomuch that *some*, as Chrysostome assures us, *absconded, and shut themselves up in their houses; others fled into deserts and solitudes, and avoided all places of public resort* *. So that whatever the priests of Apollo at Delphi (who had their town and temple in possession, and a good garrison to keep off the enemy, till they were ready for their reception) might find themselves capable of performing; it is plain the poor Christian Pastors (their Flocks dispersed, and themselves absconding), were utterly deprived of all arms but those of Faith and Prayer. This, I think, may stand for an answer to that resemblance between the *predictions* of Cyril, and the priests of Apollo, from which the objection would deduce such consequences of suspicion.

But, let us allow them both will and opportunity to do the feat: yet still, I apprehend, every likely *means* would be wanting. Chemical writers, indeed, in their romantic claims to antiquity, have boasted much of the profound knowledge of the old Egyptians in the Spagiric Art: but this without the least proof, or warrant from history. The first authentic account we have of *artificial fire* was an invention or discovery of the seventh century. One Callinicus, an

* οἱ μὲν ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις ἐκρύπτοντο, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἐρημίας μετωκίζοντο, καὶ τὰς ἀγορὰς ἔφευγον. Adv. Jud. Orat. v.

Egyptian of Heliopolis, fled from the Saracens (who then possessed that country) to Constantinople*; and taught the Greeks a military mischief, called by them ὑγρὸν πῦρ [a liquid fire], but by the Franks *feu Gregiois*. It was composed, they tell us, of naphtha and bitumen; and was blown out of iron and brass tubes; or shot from a kind of crossbow. Wherever it fell, it stuck, and burnt obstinately; and was with great difficulty extinguished. Some, indeed, say it was accompanied with a sound like thunder. But this is certain, the execution was not by the force of the explosion, but by a strong and continued burning. After this we hear of no other artificial fires till the thirteenth century; when our famous countryman, Roger Bacon, invented that very composition we call *Gunpowder*. He specifies all the ingredients; and speaks of it as a discovery of his own. It was not long ere it was put in practice: For, in the next century, Froissart, and other French historians, mention the use of *cannon*; and, as an invention of their own times.

It is true, that when the missionaries had opened themselves a way into China, and were enabled to give us a more perfect account of that great empire than we had received from the straggling adventurers, who at several times had penetrated thither before them; we are told, amongst the other wonders of these remote regions, of fire-arms, both great and small; which had been in use for sixteen hundred years; nay, these missionaries go so far as to say, that they themselves had seen cannon which had been cast six or eight centuries before. But there are other, and more early accounts, which shew we

* See Nicetas, Theophanes, Cedrenus, Constantius Porphyrogenetus.

are

are not to depend entirely upon these. M. Renaudot hath given the public a translation of two Mahometan Voyagers who visited the south part of China, in the ninth century. These Arabians are curious in describing every thing rare and uncommon, or in the least differing from their own customs and manners: And yet they give us no hint of their meeting with this prodigious machine; and such must cannon needs be deemed by men unacquainted with the use of gunpowder. Four centuries afterwards, Marco Polo the Venetian, a curious and intelligent traveller, penetrated into China by the North: and he too is silent on this head. In the next century our famous countryman Mandeville rambled thither. His genius was towards natural knowledge, having studied and professed medicine; he was skilled likewise in most of the languages of the East and West. This man sojourned a considerable time in China: he served in their armies, and commanded in their strong places: yet he takes not the least notice of cannon, which he must have used, had there been any; and the use of so interesting a novelty he would hardly have omitted to describe. For he set out on his travels in the year 1332; and Larry says that the first piece of cannon, that had been seen in France, was in 1346. Though Ducange * observes, that the Registers of the chamber of accounts † at Paris make mention of gunpowder so early as the year 1338. And Froissart under the year 1340 records, that the town of Quesnoy discharged their cannon against the French who made their courses to the gates of that city.

* In Gloss. v. BOMBARDA.

† One article of which stands thus—à Henri de Faumechon pour avoir poudres, & autres choses necessaires aux canons qui etoient devant Puy-Guillaume.

All this, when laid together, seems to furnish out a very strong proof that the Chinese had never seen cannon till after this visit of Sir John Mandeville: which agrees well with a known fact, That, about two centuries ago, the Chinese, in their wars with the Tartars, were forced to take in the assistance of the Europeans to manage their artillery.

But this fable of the ancient use of cannon in China is not to be charged on the missionaries, but on the Chinese themselves, the proudest and vainest people upon earth; arrogating to themselves the invention and improvement of every kind of art and science. They boasted, in the same manner, of the antiquity and perfection of their astronomy and mathematics. But here their performances soon betrayed the folly and impudence of their pretences. It was not so easy to detect them in the subject in question. The missionaries, on their arrival, saw cannon, which doubtless had lain there for two or three ages. And of these, the Chinese were at liberty to fable what they pleased. But it appears plain enough, they were indebted for them to their commerce with the Mahometans (the only people on the Western side of India, with whom they had then any commerce), some time between the voyage of Mandeville and the arrival of the missionaries: very likely, soon after their invention in Europe; for Peter Mexia speaks of the Moors as having the use of cannon about the year 1343. A probability very much supported by the confession of the Chinese themselves, in a modester humour, That though they had cannon from the most early times of their empire, yet, till the Tartar war, spoken of above, they were totally unacquainted with the management of artillery.

Let this suffice, in answer to this wild objection, or

or suspicion rather; the wildest sure that ever infidelity advanced to elude the force of sober evidence. An objection not only unsupported by antiquity, but discredited by itself. Inventions, which promote the health and happiness of our species, have been often, indeed, kept concealed; and when at last communicated have soon passed again into oblivion. But the natural malignity of our nature would never suffer so destructive and pernicious an invention to remain long a secret; or, when it was once known, ever to be disused or forgotten. So that if this kind of artificial fire was an early discovery of the Egyptian sages, it had a fortune which can never be accounted for on the common principles of human conduct.

CHAP. VI.

THE last objection, which is a little more plausible, is to be received with a great deal more ceremony and distinction; as coming from the great Intimados of NATURE, the secretaries and confidents of her intrigues. These men tell us, "that the fire, which burst from the foundations of the *temple*, was a mere *natural eruption*. The regions in and about the Lesser Asia were (they say) in all ages subject to earthquakes, proceeding from subterraneous fires: and the present face of the country about Sodom and Gomorrah shews, that the land of Judæa, in particular, had its entrails full of these destructive principles. The fire from the mountain of the *temple* had, they say, all the marks of a *natural eruption*; the same circumstances attending it which attend all natural eruptions, and especially that at Nicomedia. Nor is the *time*, in which it happened,

happened, sufficient to oppose to this conclusion. For these *commotions of nature* being frequent in every age, it is no wonder they should sometimes fall in with those *moral disorders*, occasioned by religious contests, which are as frequent; or that, at such a juncture, frighted superstition should catch at these accidents of terror to support a labouring cause. Hence it was (say they) that Jupiter Ammon was made to destroy the army of Cambyses, when sent to burn his temple, and lay waste the country of his worshippers; and Apollo, to fall upon the army of Brennus, when he led it to plunder the treasury at Delphi."

This is the objection: and I have not scrupled my help to set it off. For, besides the distinction due to the character of the objectors, I had other reasons why I would willingly have it seen in the best light.

Several of the circumstances attending the event in question, and *some*, which have been generally held the most *miraculous*, I have myself delivered as the effects of *natural causes*; induced thereto by the love of truth, and a fond desire of reconciling the fact itself, and the Christian *Fathers*, who relate it, to the more favourable opinion of modern *Freethinkers*. It will be fit, therefore, I should explain and justify my own conduct before I object to that of my adversaries.

The agency of a superior Being on any portion of the visible creation lying within the reach of our senses, whereby it acquires properties and directions different from what we hold it capable of receiving from the established laws of matter and motion, we call a MIRACLE.

To ask, whether God's *immediate* agency makes a necessary part of the definition; or whether, to give a miracle its name, it be sufficient that another Being, superior

superior to man, performed the operation, appears to me a very impertinent inquiry. Because there are but two sorts of men who concern themselves about the matter; Those who hold God's *moral government*; and Those who allow only his *natural*.

The first sort, the *Religionists*, must on their proper principles allow, that a work performed by superior agency, in confirmation of a doctrine worthy of God, and remaining uncontrolled by a greater, can be no other than the attestation of Heaven, to which God hath set his hand and seal. Because the permitting an *evil Being* to perform these wonders, would be deceiving his creatures, who know little or nothing of the world of spirits. It would be drawing them unavoidably into an error, where they would be fixed; which is contrary to what the Religionist conceives of God's moral attributes, and, consequently, of his government. As to the Sectators of *Naturalism*, the specific qualities of a miracle never come within the range of their inquiries; for, holding only the *natural* government of God, they deny, of course, the very existence of every thing that implies a *moral* regimen.

Miracles, then, we may be allowed to say, are of two sorts. Those where the laws of nature are *suspended* or *reversed* (such as the *budding of Aaron's rod*, and the *raising of Lazarus from the dead*). And those which only *give a new direction* to its Laws (such as bringing *water from the rock*, and *stopping the issue of blood*). For miracles being an useful, not an ostentatious display of God's power, we cannot but conclude, He would employ the one or other sort indifferently, as best served the purpose of his interposition.

Now, as it would be *impious* to bring in NATURAL CAUSES to explain the *first* sort; so, totally to exclude those

those causes in the latter, would be *superstitious*; and both, infinitely *absurd*. Who, for instance, would venture to affirm that the prolific virtue in the stock of *Aaron's rod* contributed to the blossoming of its branch? Or, on the other hand, that the water which came from the *rock* at the command of Moses, was just then created to do honour to his ministry? In this last case, what more would a rational Believer conclude, than that GOD, by making, at the instant, a fissure in the rock, gave room for the water to burst out, which had been before lodged there by *nature*, as in its proper reservoir? And the sober Critic, who proceeds in this manner, does no more than follow that method of *interpreting*, which God himself useth in *working* the miracle; which is, to give to Nature all that Nature could easily perform.

We are further encouraged in thus explaining the mode of God's interposition, by one of the most awful exertions of Divine Power, recorded in Holy Writ. But, previous to the story, the Reader should be reminded of what hath been observed of the *order* of the appearances both in the *natural* eruption at *Nicomedia*, and in that, we call, *miraculous*, at Jerusalem; where, in each case, the desolation began with *winds* and tempest; was continued by an *earthquake*; and concluded in a *fiery* eruption. The story is this: The Prophet Elijah, oppressed with the corruptions of the house of Israel, is commanded to wait God's presence, and attend his word. "And "he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount be-"fore the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by, "and a great and strong WIND rent the mountains, "and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; "but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the "wind an EARTHQUAKE; but the Lord was not in "the

" the earthquake: and after the earthquake a FIRE; " but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire " a SMALL STILL VOICE*." His coming *to shake terribly the earth* is here, we see, described, in all the pomp of incensed Majesty. Yet it is remarkable, that the precursors of his presence follow each other in the same order of physical progression, in which nature ranged the several phænomena at Nicomedia and Jerusalem; the *tempests*, the *earthquake*, and the *fire:* an order, the sacred Historian plainly points out to us, where he says, that *God was not in any of these*; intimating, that they were pure physical appearances, the parade of nature, thus far suffered to do its office without stop or impediment: but that *He was in the small still voice*, which closed this dreadful procession; intimating, that these natural appearances were *ministerial* to the *interposition* of the Author and Lord of Nature.

Let us apply all this to our argument; and consider, how a sober believer, convinced by the force of evidence, would interpret the *miracle in question*. He would, without doubt, conclude, that the mineral and metallic substances (which, by their accidental fermentation, are wont to take fire and burst out in flames) were the native contents of the place from which they issued: but that, in all likelihood, they would there have slept, and still continued in the quiet innoxious state in which they had so long remained, had not the *breath of the Lord awoke and kindled them*.

But when the Divine Power had thus *miraculously* interposed to *stir up* the rage of these fiery elements, and yet to *restrain* their fury to the objects of his vengeance, he then again suffered them to do their

* 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

ordinary

ordinary office: because *Nature* thus directed would, by the exertion of its own laws, answer all the ends of the *moral designation*.

The consequence of which would be, that its effects, whether *destructive* or only *terrific*, would be the same with those attending mere natural eruptions.

So far, indeed, one cannot but suspect, That the *specific* qualities in the fermented elements, which occasioned the *frightful appearances*, though they were natural to enflamed matter under certain circumstances, were yet, by the peculiar pleasure of Providence, *given* on this occasion; and not left merely to the conjunction of mechanic causes, or the fortuitous concourse of matter and motion, to *produce*. And my reason is, because these *frightful* appearances, namely the *cross in the heavens, and on the garments*, were admirably fitted, as MORAL EMBLEMS, to proclaim the triumph of CHRIST over Julian. For the apostate having, in a public and contemptuous manner, taken the *monogramme* and *cross* out of the military ensigns *, which Constantine had put there, in memory of the aërial vision that presaged his victories; the same kind of triumphant cross was again erected in the heavens, to confound the vanity of that impotent bravade: and having forbidden the followers of Jesus, by public edict, to use the very *name* of Christians; a *stigmatic cross* was now imprinted upon the garments of those who were seconding his impieties, or were witnesses to the defeat of his attempt.

And, in these shining marks of vengeance, there was nothing low, fantastical, or superstitious. The impress was great and solemn, and corresponded to the dignity of the occasion.

Another *use* of these *terrific appearances* (now first

* Greg. Naz. Or. iii.—Sozom. l. v. c. 17.

beginning

beginning to manifest itself, as in many other circumstances of religious dispensation, produced in one age for the service of another, most remote) will further confirm our opinion of their *final cause*. The *use*, I mean, is their supporting the testimony of the *fathers*. The *crosses on the garments*, to the men of that time, not apprized of their being meteoric marks, must appear a very incredulous circumstance: on which too, (whatever the nature of the crosses was), the evidence of the divine interposition was seen not to depend. Yet the *fathers*, with the utmost confidence, and most perfect agreement, relate this circumstance at large; dwell more upon it, and glory more in it, than on all the rest. Hence I infer, that nothing but the notoriety of the fact induced them to load the miracle with a circumstance, which, they could not but see, was so far from adding credit to the evidence, that it would render the whole transaction suspicious.

Thus much concerning these *two sorts of miracles*, and the different manner of treating them. But it is to be observed, There is yet a *third*, compounded of the other *two*, where the laws of nature are in part *arrested* and *suspended*; and, in part only, *differently directed*. Of this kind was the punishment of the old world by a *deluge* of waters. Now, if, to such as these, we should apply the way of interpretation proper to the *second* sort, where only a new direction is given to the laws of nature; the absurdities, arising from this abusive application, would go near to disgrace the method itself: as That Divine hath helped to shew us, who ingeniously contrived to bring on the deluge of waters by the aid of an approaching *comet*, but was never after, by any physical address, able to draw it off again. And such disgraces are hardly to be avoided: for, in the *second* and simpler kind, the physical

physical interpretation hath *experience* to support it: whereas, in the *third* and more complicated, the artist must be content with an *hypothesis*.

This was proper to be said before we came to try the force of the objection.

1. It begins with observing, "That the regions in and about the Lesser Asia were, in all ages, subject to earthquakes, caused by subterraneous fires; and that Judæa in particular had its entrails full of these destructive principles; as appears even from the present face of the country about Sodom and Gomorrah."

If this account be true, as I believe it is, then Judæa was a proper theatre (as occasion required) for this *specific* display of the divine vengeance. And we see why *fire* was the scourge employed: as *water* doubtless would have been, were the region of Judæa naturally subject to inundations. For miracles not being an ostentatious but a necessary instrument of God's moral government, we cannot conceive it probable that he would *create* the elements for this purpose; but *use* those which lay ready stored up against the *day of visitation*. By this means, his *wisdom* would appear as conspicuous as his *power*, when it should be seen, that the provisions laid in, at the formation of the world, for the use and solace of his creatures while they continued in obedience, could, at his word, be turned into scourges when they became faithless and rebellious. The force of this reasoning is so obvious, that, had Providence been pleased to use the contrary method, unbelievers, I am persuaded, would have made that very method an objection to the credibility of the fact. However, though it seemeth most agreeable to what we conceive of divine wisdom, that it should often use the instrumentality of nature in

in its miraculous interpositions, yet, let it be observed, the same wisdom always provides, that the *Author of Nature* be not lost or obscured under the glare and noise of his *instruments*.

It is said, the region of Judea was, from the quality of its contents, much subject to earthquakes and fiery eruptions. If so, how happened it, that, from the most early times to the period in question, there never was any unusual disorder in its entrails (if you except an earthquake, which Josephus mentions as happening in the time of Herod) but at the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; at the destruction of Korah and his company; in the days of Uzziah *; at the Crucifixion; and on this attempt of Julian? How happened it, that this destructive element lay quiet in the midst of so much fuel, and for so many ages; and only then, and at those critical junctures, shewed itself, when God had a contest with his enemies? Can any reasonable account be given of such a disposition but this, that, whenever God decrees to punish, it is his purpose the divine agency should be fully manifested? To pretend, they were all natural events, and the several coincidences merely casual, is supposing something vastly more incredible than what unbelievers would persuade us is implied in the notion of a *miracle*.

2. But it is said, "This eruption from the foundations of the temple had all the *marks* of a natural event, being attended with the same circumstances which, Amm. Marcellinus tells us, accompanied the earthquake at Nicomedia."

It is very certain, the eruption from the foundations of the temple had all these *marks*; and if our explanation of the miracle, as it seems the most *rational*, be indeed the *true*, it could not but have them.

* See Amos i. 1. and Zech. xiv. 5.

When God had kindled the fiery matter in this store-house of his wrath, all the effects that succeeded, must needs be the same with those which attend the explosion of any other subterraneous fire. What would follow, had they not been the same, but rejection of the whole story? which, in times so squeamish as ours, and so difficult of credit, would have passed for a fairy-tale. This consideration induced me to shew at large, the exact conformity, throughout the process of the event, between the visitation at Jerusalem and the disaster at Nicomedia. Not but I foresaw the consequence. It is the least of an unbeliever's care to reconcile his objections to one another. I knew his first cavil to the credit of the fact would be the *wonderful* attending the eruption. I therefore provided against it, by shewing this fact to be similar in its main circumstances to the best attested relations of natural events. But I knew too, that, in case of a defect here, he would not be ashamed to point his cavil the other way, and turn this very *resemblance* to an argument against a supernatural interposition.—What pity is it that Ammianus, who best knew the full extent of this *resemblance*, was not more quick-sighted! He was an enemy of the Christian name (indeed, to do him justice, more fair and candid than any I know of the same denomination amongst ourselves), but little sensible of its force, and so much confounded with the event, That, instead of telling the affair at large, which fell in so exactly with his detailed account of the disaster at Nicomedia, he hurries it over with the rapidity of one of the frightened workmen, who had just escaped the common desolation.

After all, a general *resemblance* in the *effects* is allowed. What we insist on is, the *difference* in the *cause* or original. And this difference is suppor[ted] even

even by the very nature of things from whence that general resemblance arose.

Nicomedia, a city of Bithynia, was placed on an eminence, at the bottom of a Gulph of that name, in the *Propontis*. Now mountains thus situated, into whose cavernous entrails the sea may find its way, must, if other natural causes favour, be, sometimes, subject to fiery eruptions; of which we need no other example than the mountain Vesuvius. But the temple-hill at Jerusalem was neither large nor cavernous; nor was it in the neighbourhood of the sea: circumstances, which, all the world over, are wont to produce this effect. Neither were any *new openings* made, at this time, into the bowels of the mountain; which, by letting in *air* or *water*, might be supposed to ferment and inflame their combustible contents. The historians who relate this *attempt* inform us, that even some parts of the old foundations were left standing to erect the new edifice upon; and in others, where the old works were little better than a heap of rubbish, or at least judged too infirm, that incumbrance only was removed. This appears from the relations of Socrates and Sozomene compared with one another. Socrates assures us *, that the earthquake threw out stones from the old foundations: which he mentions to shew the *literal* accomplishment of the prophecy of *Jesus*, that there *should not be left one stone upon another*. Sozomene indeed affirms †, that the foundations were cleared; but then he goes on and says, the earthquake *threw out* stones. Now, as no new foundations were ever laid, he must mean with Socrates, the stones of the old. And thus the seeming difference in their accounts will be reconciled. Let me add, that more than once before, and at distant times, they had dug

* L. iii. c. 20. † L. v. c. 22.

deep into this hill, to lay the foundations of Solomon's and Herod's temples: and then every thing continued quiet. Yet, now, when no new openings were made, the effort to build a *third* was followed by a fiery eruption.

Again, in natural ferments of this kind, the commotion is generally very *extensive*, and runs through large tracts of country. Thus the earthquake mentioned by Josephus shook the whole land of Judæa; and the disaster at Nicomedia, as Marcellinus informs us, was occasioned by a tremor which went over Macedonia, Asia, and Pontus; and did infinite mischief throughout its course *. The same historian tells us of another, which shook the whole globe of the earth †; and, described by Jerom ‡ in these words, "Ea tempestate, "terræ motu totius orbis qui post Juliani mortem ac-"cidit maria egressa sunt terminos suos," &c. On the contrary, the eruption at Jerusalem was confined to the very spot on which the temple had stood; and continued only to deny access to such who, not taking warning by those whom it had destroyed, would still persevere in their impiety §. A circumstance very different from common earthquakes and fiery eruptions; and of which we have no examples, save in the eruption that destroyed Korah and his company; and in the earthquake at the Crucifixion of our Lord; and perhaps in that in the days of Uzziah; all of them supernatural events.

Thirdly, in natural eruptions the fire continues burn-

* Iisdem diebus terræmotus horrendi per Macedoniam, Asiamque, & Pontum adsiduis pulsibus oppida multa concusserunt & montes. Inter monumenta tamen multiformium ærumnarum eminuere Nicomediæ clades, &c. Marcell. l. xvii. c. 7.

† L. xxvi. c. 10. ‡ Vit. Hilar.

§ —fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum. L. xxiii. c. 1.

ing till the fuel which supplies it be consumed. But the witnesses to *this* assign a very different period to its fury. It continued just as long as the builders persisted in their attempt, and no longer. At every new effort to proceed, the rising fire drove them back; but at the instant they gave out, it totally subsided. This so terrified Julian, that Chrysostome tells us*, he relinquished the enterprize for fear the fire should turn upon his own head. And this made Marcellinus say,—"elemento DESTINATIUS repellente"—an expression of great elegance, to imply the direction of an intelligent agent.

3. In the last place we are told, "That even so critical a juncture is not to be accounted of: for that *religious squabbles* and *natural prodigies* are equally common; and church-artists never wanting to fit them to one another. Hence, they say, are derived those two notable judgments of Jupiter-Ammon and Apollo, upon the armies of Cambyses and Brennus."

The observation is plausible. It pleases the imagination: and wants nothing but truth to reconcile it to the judgment.

In miracles performed by the *ministry* of God's messengers, where the laws of nature are *suspended* or *reversed*, it is sufficient if he who works them shall, at any time, declare their purpose and intention. But, in a miracle performed by the *immediate power* of God, without the intervention of his servants, in which only a *new direction* is given to the laws of nature, one of these two conditions is

* ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰουλιανὸς καίτοι τοσαύτην μανίαν ἔχων περὶ τὴν σπουδὴν ἐκείνην, δείσας μὴ περαιτέρω προελθὼν, ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ κεφαλὴν καλέσῃ τὸ πῦρ, ἀπέστη ἡττηθεὶς μετὰ τοῦ ἔθνους παντός. Adver. Judæos, Orat. ii.

required to give it credit: either that an inspired servant of God predicted it, and declared its purpose beforehand, as Samuel did the *storm of thunder and rain*, the declaration of God's displeasure, for the people's demand of a king: or that it be seen to interpose so seasonably and critically as to cover and secure God's moral government from inevitable dishonour, as in the case before us. Without one or other of these conditions, superstition would break loose at once, and soon over-run the world: for bigotry (always in close conjunction with our natural malignity) would convert every unusual appearance of natural evil into a prodigy, and a punishment; but why do I say it *would*? It hath in fact done so; and every age and religion hath abounded with these spurious judgments, by which human charity and God's moral government hath been incessantly violated and dishonoured. And yet an ordinary attention to the obvious and rational conditions, here pointed out, would have prevented this mischief; for I know but of one instance in all antiquity that could embarrass the decision: and that is,—the expedition of Cambyses; for it would have been a greater wonder that an army should get safe through the sands of those deserts, than that it perished in them. The case I mean is the destruction of Brennus's army before Delphi. Here, neither of these conditions seemed wanting. The priests of Apollo, we are told, *predicted* the approaching desolation: and the *cause* (which was the punishment of impiety and irreligion) appeared not altogether unworthy the divine interposition. These, together with the faith due to the best human testimony, which strangely concurred to support the fact, were, I presume, the reasons that inclined the excellent Dean Prideaux to

to esteem the accident *miraculous*; not so weakly as hath been represented by some; nor yet with that maturity of judgment, which one would expect from so great a master of ancient history. His words are these—"Brennus marched on with the gross "of his army towards Delphos, to plunder the tem- "ple—But he there met a wonderful defeat. For on "his approaching the place, there happened a ter- "rible storm of thunder, lightning, and hail, which "destroyed great numbers of his men, and, at the "same time, there was as terrible an earthquake, "which rending the mountains in pieces, threw down "whole rocks upon them, which overwhelmed them "by hundreds at a time.—Thus was God pleased, "in a very extraordinary manner, to execute his "vengeance upon those sacrilegious wretches for "the sake of religion in general, how false and "idolatrous soever that religion was, for which that "temple at Delphos was erected *." The learned historian, we see, takes it for granted, and he is not mistaken, that Brennus and his Gauls acknowledged the divinity of Apollo. Julius Cæsar informs us, that the Gauls had very near the same sentiments of the greater deities (as they were called) with the Greeks and Romans †, and the rest of the politer Pagan nations. And, distinct from his authority, we know, that their principle of *intercommunity* made their national Gods free of all countries. Brennus, therefore, was a sacrilege in form. But notwithstanding this, there are many strong objections to the Dean's notion concerning the *quality* of the disaster.

* Connect. Vol. ii. p. 20, 21. Fol. ed.

† —Post hunc [Mercurium] Apollinem, Martem & Jovem & Minervam. De his eandem fere, quam reliquæ gentes, habent opinionem. De Bell. Gall. l. vi.

This sacred place, the repository of immense riches, had, at other times, been attempted with impunity, nay with success; for it had been so often plundered, that, when Strabo wrote, the temple was become exceeding poor *. And if, amongst these several insults, there were any more worthy the divine interposition, *for the sake of religion in general*, than the rest, it was when the Phocenses, the natural and civil protectors of the temple, plundered it of all its wealth, to raise an army of mercenary soldiers. And yet, at that time, the offended deity gave no marks of his displeasure. Now to suppose, when several attempts of this kind had succeeded, that the failure of one, though attended with some uncommon circumstances, was a divine interposition, is going very far in favour of an hypothesis. If it should be said, that the God of Israel suffered his own temple to be several times profaned (which Julian himself takes care to remember †) and yet at last vindicated the glory of his name; I reply, there was this essential difference in the case, that whenever the temple of the Jews was violated, the evil was foretold as due to their crimes, and the people made acquainted with the impending punishment: and that now, when its sanctity was insulted by a Gentile's attempt to restore its honours, it was in defiance of a prophecy which had doomed it to a final desolation.

There is yet a stronger objection to the learned Dean's solution; which is, that, had the defeat been miraculous, the interposition would have lost its end. For it could never have been deemed as effectuated *to vindicate religion in general*; but *as* done *for the sake of their false Gods only*; the story informing us, that

* νυνί γέ τοι πενίστατόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς ἱερόν. Lib. xi.

† See pp. 78, 79.

the

the *priests* of the temple denounced the coming vengeance; and ascribed it to the wrath and power of Apollo * and his two sisters. So that this intervention would have been the means of fixing idolatry, and rivetting down polytheism upon the Gentile world.

But what is still more, the circumstances of the times did not at all favour a miracle for the purpose assigned, namely, *for the sake of religion in general, against impiety.* The popular folly, in the Pagan world, ran all the other way. It was not *irreligion*, but *superstition*, that then infected mankind. They had no need of a real miracle to remind them of the superintendency of Providence; they were but too apt to ascribe every unusual appearance of nature to moral agency. So that, had Heaven *now* thought fit to interfere; we cannot but conclude, it had been rather in *discredit of idolatry in particular*, than in *behalf of religion in general.*—There is hardly any need to observe, that the reasons, which make against God's own intervention, hold equally against his permitting evil spirits to co-operate with the delusions of their priests.

Having, therefore, excluded all superior agency from this affair; it will be incumbent on us to shew, by what human contrivance it might have been effected. For it must be owned, its arrival at so critical a juncture will not easily suffer us to suppose it a mere *natural* event.

* In hoc partium certamine repentè universorum templorum antistites, simul & ipsæ vates, sparsis crinibus, cum insignibus atque infulis, pavidi vecordesque in primam pugnantium aciem procurrunt: advenisse Deum clamant; eumque se vidisse dissilientem in templum—Juvenem supra humanum modum insignis pulchritudinis, comitesque ei duas armatas virgines ex propinquis duabus *Dianæ Minervæque* ædibus occurrisse: nec oculis tantum hæc se perspexisse; audisse etiam stridorem arcûs ac strepitum armorum.—Just. lib. xxiv. c. 8.

The

The inclination of a Pagan Priest to assist his God in extremity will hardly be called in question. We see, by the round story of *those* at *Delphi*, that they were not embarrassed by vulgar scruples. They told their townsmen, they saw the God, at his first alighting, in the person of a young man of exquisite beauty, and his two virgin associates, Diana and Minerva, with each her proper arms of bow and spear: But they did not expect the people should trust to their *eye-sight* only; they assured them, they *heard*, besides, the clang of their arms.

So much for a good disposition: which was not ill seconded by their public management and address. On the first rumour of Brennus's march against them, they issued out orders as from the oracle, to all the region round, forbidding the country people to secrete or bear away their wine and provisions. The effects of this order succeeded to their expectation. The half-starved Barbarians finding, on their arrival in Phocis, so great a plenty of all things, made short marches, dispersed themselves over the country, and revelled in the abundance that was provided for them. This respite gave time to the friends and allies of the God to come to his assistance: so that by such time as Brennus was sat down at the foot of the rocks, there was a numerous garrison within to dispute his ascent *.

Their advantages of situation likewise supported the

* Gallorum vulgus, ex longâ inopiâ, ubi primùm vino cæteroque commeatibus referta rura invenit, non minus abundantiâ quàm victoriâ lætum, per agros se sparserat; desertisque signis, ad occupandâ omnia pro victoribus vagabantur. Quæ res dilationem Delphis dedit. Prima namque opinione adventûs Gallorum prohibiti agrestes oraculis feruntur messes, vinaque villis efferre.—Salutare præceptum—velut morâ Gallis objectâ auxilia finitimorum convenere. Justin. lib. xxiv. c. 7.

measures

measures they had taken for a vigorous defence. The town and temple of Delphi were seated on a bare and cavernous rock; defended, on all sides, with precipices, instead of walls. The large recess within assumed the form of a theatre: so that the shouts of soldiers, and the sounds of military instruments, re-echoing from rock to rock, and from cavern to cavern, increased the clamour to an immense degree. Which, as the historian observes, could not but have great effects on ignorant and barbarous minds*.

The playing off these panic terrors was not indeed sufficient of itself to repel and dissipate a host of fierce and hungry invaders; but it enabled the defenders of the place to keep them at bay, till a more solid entertainment was provided for them. I mean the *explosion*, and fall of that portion of the rock, at the foot of which the greater part of the army lay encamped.

For, the town and temple, as we observed, were seated on a bare and hollow rock; which would here and there afford vent-holes for such fumes as generated within to transpire. One of these, from an intoxicating quality, discovered in the steam which issued at it, was rendered very famous, by being fitted to the recipient of the priestess of Apollo †. Now if we only suppose this,

* Templum & Civitatem non muri, sed præcipitia; non manu facta, sed naturalia præsidia defendunt; prorsus ut incertum sit, utrum munimentum loci, an majestas Dei plus hic admirationis habeat. Media saxi rupes in formam theatri recessit. Quamobrem & hominum clamor, & si quando accedit tubarum sonus, personantibus & respondentibus inter se rupibus, multiplex audiri, ampliorque quàm editur, resonare solet. Quæ res majorem majestatis terrorem ignaris rei, & admirationem stupentibus plerumque affert. Just. l. xxiv. c. 6.

† Ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ ὡς ἄνδρες ποιμαίνοντες, ἐπιτύχοιεν τῷ μαντείῳ, καὶ ἔνθεοί τε ἐγένοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀτμοῦ, καὶ ἐμαντεύσαντο ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος. Pausan. Phoc. c. v.—Φασὶ δ' εἶναι τὸ μαντεῖον, ἄντρον κοῖλον κατὰ βάθους, οὐ μάλα εὐρύστομον· ἀναφέρεσθαι δ' ἐξ αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα ἐνθουσιαστικόν. Strabo, Geogr.

this, or any other of the vapours, emitted from the fissures, in so large and cavernous a rock, to be endowed with that unctuous or otherwise inflammable quality which modern experience shews us to be common in mines and subterraneous places, we can easily conceive how the priests of the temple might, without a miracle, be able to work the wonders which history speaks of as effected in this transaction. For the throwing down a lighted torch or two into a chasm, from whence such a vapour issued, would set the whole into a flame; which, by rarifying and dilating the inclosed air, would, like fired gunpowder, blow up all before it. These effects are so known and dreaded in coal-mines, subject to inflammable vapours, that, in some of them, in the north of this kingdom, instead of lamps or candles, which would be fatal, the workmen are obliged to have recourse to a very extraordinary contrivance to give them light, which is the application of a flint to a steel cylinder in motion. And we cannot suppose the priests, the guardians of the rock, could be long ignorant of such a quality; which either chance or designed experiments might bring to their acquaintance: or that they would divulge it when they had discovered it. I am even inclined to think, they had the art of managing this quality at pleasure; so as to produce a greater or less effect, as their occasions required. It is certain, Strabo relates *, that one Onomarchus with his companions,

Geogr, l. ix.—In hoc rupis anfractu, media ferme montis altitudine, planities exigua est, atque in ea profundum terræ foramen, quod in vacula patet: ex quo frigidus spiritus, vi quadam velut vento in sublime expulsus, mentes Vatum in vecordiam vertit, impletasque Deo, responsa consulentibus dare cogit. Just. lib. xxiv. c. 6.

* τοὺς περὶ τὸν Ὀνόμαρχον ἐπιχειρήσαντας ἀνασκάπτειν νύκτωρ Σεισμῶν γενομένων μεγάλων, ἔξω τοῦ ναοῦ πίπτεσθαι καὶ παύσασθαι τῆς ἀνασκαφῆς· ἐμβαλεῖν δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις φόβον τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιχειρήσεως. Strab. Geogr. lib. ix.

panions, as they were attempting by night to dig their way through to rob the holy treasury, were frightened from their work by the violent shaking of the rock: and he adds, that the same phænomenon had defeated many other attempts of the like nature. Now whether the tapers which Onomarchus and his companions were obliged to use while they were at work, inflamed the vapour, or whether the priests of Apollo heard them at it, and set fire to a countermine, it is certain, a *quality* of this kind would always stand them in stead.

Such then, I presume, was the expedient they employed to dislodge this nest of hornets, which had settled at the foot of their sacred rock.

It is further remarkable that this explosion was followed (as it was likely it should) by an event of as much terror and affright, a *storm of thunder, lightning, and hail*; which these violent concussions of the air physically generate. For Justin assures us *, the tempest did not happen till *after* the fall of the rock; though the *Dean*, we see, makes them operate *together*.

But what, after all, if these Barbarians were something less unfortunate than the Priests of Apollo would have us think them; and had got a considerable booty before they fell into this disgrace? Strabo tells an odd story † of the Roman General Cæpio's finding a vast treasure at Tolose, supposed to be part of the riches which its inhabitants, the Tectosages, had brought

* *Insecuta deinde* tempestas est, quæ grandine & frigore saucios ex vulneribus absumpsit. L. xxiv. c. 8.

† — καὶ τοὺς Τεκτοσάγας δὲ φασὶ μετασχεῖν τῆς ἐπὶ Δελφοὺς στρατείας, καὶ τούς τε θησαυροὺς τοὺς εὑρεθέντας παρ' αὐτοῖς, ὑπὸ Καιπίωνος τοῦ στρατηγοῦ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐν πόλει Τολώσσῃ, τῶν ἐκείθεν χρημάτων μέρος εἶναι φασί· προσθεῖναι δὲ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων ἀνειρεῖντας καὶ ἐξελασκομένους τὸν Θεόν. L. iv.

home

home from this very expedition against the Delphic God. It would almost make one suspect, that the priests, before they came to extremities with the sacred rock, had entered into treaty with these Barbarians, and paid them a large tribute to decamp and quit the country; which possibly they might receive with the same good faith that their countrymen, in a like expedition, weighed out the *Roman gold*, before the capitol; and so necessitate the Delphians to send down the rock upon them to clear accounts; just as, in the other instance, Camillus revenged their extortion in Italy. What seems to strengthen our conjecture is, that the Tectosages, in order to appease the offended Deity, had consecrated this treasure to holy uses, with an addition of their own. Nor does it take from the credit of the story, that all which the penetrating Strabo hath to oppose is the ill success of Brennus and his followers, as we find it related in the common histories of the expedition. If this were the case, the pretended miracle shrinks into a very slender kind of prodigy.

However, the account given above seems, on the whole, to be the true solution of this extraordinary event. It is easy and natural; and the cause is equal to the effect. But my chief reason for being so explicit, was, to add still further support to our general conclusion; as the detail would shew, that all the main circumstances in the destruction at Delphi, and in that at Jerusalem, were essentially different.

The *rock* on which Delphi stood, was exactly fitted for such a contrivance: The *mountain* at Jerusalem, by its compactness and continuity, altogether improper. The easy *object* of Apollo's resentment was a rabble of half-starved and half-intoxicated Barbarians: The *object* of the resentment of the God of Israel

Israel was a select number of the politest, joined to the craftiest, people upon earth, detached to support a project, which the ablest artists of all kinds were assembled to put in execution. The *priests* of Apollo were masters of the town and temple, and supported by a powerful garrison: Both the *priests* and *people* of the God of Israel were dispersed, and had left the place free and open to their enemies.

But the principal difference lay in the grounds and reasons of the thing. By which I do not mean, that one event was supposed to be the agency of *a God of the Greeks*, and the other of *the God of the Jews*: For, who was the *true*, and who the *false* God, the Gentlemen, with whom we are concerned, seem willing should remain undetermined. The difference lay in this, That the interposition of the *Delphic God* was to save the treasures of his priests; which he had, at other times, and on more flagitious terms, suffered to be violated. But the interposition of the *Lord of Hosts* was to save the honour of his name, which he hath never since suffered to be impeached by malice or impiety, throughout a course of fourteen hundred years. Or, in other words, to defend the general system of revelation from being forcibly borne down by the whole power of the *Roman* empire. For the attempt to re-establish the Jewish worship was professedly and publicly to give the lie to the *prophecies* on which Christianity was founded, that is, to the *God of Heaven* himself: the *most important occasion* we can conceive of exerting his power, as including in it a NECESSITY to exert it. But more of this, when I come, hereafter, to speak *of the nature of that evidence which demands the assent of every reasonable man to a miraculous fact.*

However, it may not be amiss at present, so far

to forestall that inquiry, as, by way of specimen, to say one word of a particular hitherto untouched, the *specific nature* of this supernatural event. A circumstance which seems greatly to confirm and illustrate all that hath been said. I have observed, that the *end* or *purpose* of it was twofold: 1. To *support* the economy of God's dispensation*. And, 2. To *punish* the impiety of those who attempted to disturb it†. As in order to evince the *first* end or purpose, I have shewn‡, that the attempt aimed to falsify the prophecy, which had foretold the final destruction of the temple; so, in order to evince the *second*, I shall now shew, that this disaster was the very specific punishment, which, the prophet Isaiah informs the Jews, was reserved and kept in store, to be the scourge for impiety and rebellion. *This seems to be considerable, and* of moment. For where, as in the *extraordinary* dispensations to this people, the specific punishments, which, from time to time, were reserved, by God's decree, for their chastisement, had been marked out, and set before them; it is reasonable to expect, that, when a supernatural punishment was so inflicted, it would be by the agency of such a specific disaster as was foretold would be attendant on the crime. Now this, we say, was exactly the case in the affair before us. The prophet describes the punishment, reserved for the obstinacy and impiety of the Jewish people, in these words, *Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with* THUNDER, *and with* EARTHQUAKE, *and great noise, with* STORM AND TEMPEST, *and the* FLAME OF DEVOURING FIRE §.

Here we see the denunciation and execution are so wonderfully coincident, that one might be well excused

* See Book i. c. 1. † See p. 185.
‡ See Book i. c. 3. § Isa. xxix. 6.

in

in going a little further, and even supposing the words here quoted to be a particular prophesy of the disaster in question. And our conjecture would receive further countenance from this important circumstance, that the immediate preceding verses are an undoubted prophesy of the total destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel the city where David dwelt—I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust—yea, it shall be at an instant, suddenly**. However this be; so much, at least, is certain, That had a writer described this disaster after the event, and copied from it, he could not have given a more exact and faithful picture of it than the prophet Isaiah hath here done.

But it is now time to turn to our *mathematician*; and request him to prepare his tables of calculation; if for no other purpose than to gratify our curiosity in the *doctrine of chances*. When he is ready, let us know, how many millions to one are the odds against a *natural eruption*'s securing the honour of the Christian Religion, at that very important juncture when God's omnipotence was thus openly defied; and not by this or that crack-brained atheist, but by all the powers of the world combined against it. Let him add these other circumstances, that the mountain of the temple was, both from its frame and situation, most unlikely to be the scene of a *physical eruption*: and that this eruption was confined, contrary to its usual nature, to that very spot of ground: and then see how these will increase the odds. But his task is but begun; he must reckon another circumstance, the

* Ver. 3, 4, 5. confer this with Matt. xxiv. 17, 18.

fire's obstinately breaking out by fits, as often as they attempted to proceed; and its total extinction on their giving up the enterprize: let him, I say, add this to the account, and see how it will then stand. To these, too, he must join the phænomena of the cross in the air, and on the garments; which will open a new career to his calculations. And further, to inflame the reckoning, he may take notice, that history speaks but of *one* other commotion confined to the intrails of this hill, which likewise happened at a very critical juncture, the *crucifixion* of our Lord, when the *vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent* *. Lastly, he may reflect, if he pleases, that all these odds lie on the side of a divine interposition to hinder an *attempt* which a space of fourteen hundred years hath never seen revived; though the project itself (the restoration of one of the most celebrated temples in the world) is in its nature most alluring to superstition: and though the long imbecilities of religion and government, in the various revolutions there undergone, afforded ample opportunity to a rich and crafty [illegible] to effect what was the only means of wiping off the opprobrium, and redeeming them from the contempt. He must, I say, take in all these, when he sums up the account. And then, if he be ingenuous, without doubt he will confess, that to compute the immensity of these odds will exceed all the powers of number.

To speak freely, The attempt to account for it by a *natural cause* is a wretched evasion. Let us consider in how different a manner unbelievers are wont to treat those parallel miracles, *The bursting of water from the rock at the command of Moses*; and, *of fire*

* Matt. xxvii. 51.

from

from the earth to punish the rebellion of Korah. No man was ever so wild to charge these facts to the account of *natural causes.* And yet, the sudden gushing out of water from a rock is certainly a commoner thing than a burning mountain. But the reason of their reserve, in these instances, is plain; they had other causes at hand, besides natural events, to exclude a miracle; such as human artifice and contrivance; the uncertainty of very early history, &c. But, in the eruption from the foundations of the temple, the fact was so well circumstanced, that an objector found nothing else left to trade with but this last miserable shift: which, when all other means fail, is still at hand to keep back that bugbear to impiety, GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT, which government, together with REVEALED RELIGION, founded on it, are (to observe by the way) as compleatly exhibited by *one* miraculous interposition, fully proved, as by *one hundred.*

In support of all that hath been said, give me leave to observe, That the contemporary evidence, who, from their more intimate knowledge of the fact, must needs be allowed the best judges of its nature in general, give no intimation that they themselves thought, or that others suspected it to be a *natural event.* Julian, indeed, to hide his confusion, insinuates * something like it, but under cover of the destruction of the temple at Daphne †; and otherwise, in so oblique and obscure a manner as shews him to be ashamed of so foolish a pretence. But then his honest and well-instructed advocate, Amm. Marcellinus, is far from giving into this suspicion; the different manner in

* See pp. 80, &c.

† Which, it is not unlikely, was burnt by common lightning, though Julian, in his Misopogon, directly charges it on the Christians.

which he relates the two events at Nicomedia and Jerusalem evidently imply the contrary. In his account of the *former*, out of a pure parade of science, he digresses, on the physical causes of *earthquakes*. In the *latter* (would the fact have borne him out) he had better reasons than an affectation to shew his learning, to tell us what the philosophers had said most plausible, in favour of a natural event; for had that been the fact, the true *cause*, he knew, was universally mistaken; and Paganism was essentially concerned to have that mistake rectified. On the contrary, Ammianus hath contributed to support the general opinion, by expressions which evidently imply *superior agency*. Yet was this candid Historian nothing shy in speaking his mind, when he conceived either fraud or superstition had too large a share in common reports. For, mentioning the conflagration of Apollo's temple at Daphne, which the Christians boasted to be miraculously consumed by lightning, he frankly declares it was suspected to have been set on fire by themselves *. But why should I insist on the conduct of so fair an adversary as Marcellinus, when Libanius, and the rest of Julian's sophists, those bigots to Paganism, and inflamers of their master's follies, dared not so much as mutter the least suspicion of this nature, though the first of them, as we have seen, hath mentioned this disaster in such a manner as shews he well understood the necessity of throwing into shade, what he could give no good account of, if placed in a fair light. Nor was their silence the effect of fear, or want of good-will. In more dangerous and offensive matters they spoke freely; and with insolence enough;

* Suspicabatur id Christianos egisse stimulatos invidia, quod ideni templum inviti videbant ambitioso circumdari peristylio. L. xxii. c. 13.

For

For when the Christians every where gave out that the death of Julian was miraculous, these friends of his publicly maintained that he was basely assassinated by a Christian soldier; and undertook to make good the charge, at their own peril*, if the emperor would appoint commissaries to examine into the fact. Lastly, the *Fathers* and *Church Historians*, who are so large in establishing the credit of God's interposition at Jerusalem, afford us not the least hint that their adversaries ever thought of evading it by the pretence of a *natural event*.

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* See Libanius ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἰουλιανοῦ τιμωρίας. Fabr. Bibl. Græc. vol. vii. and the oblique reflections of the noble author of the *Characteristics* upon it, vol. iii. Mis. ii. c. 3.—But, by what I can gather from antiquity, it seems to have been a frank calumny. Eutropius, who was in the action, and Marcellinus, who served there in the body-guards, seem, neither of them, to have entertained the least suspicion of this kind. Besides, Julian was wounded at that very instant when the darts of the Persians were known to do most execution; that is to say, in one of their *dissembled flights*; and when his own guards forewarned him of the danger, in pressing upon their rear—"Clamabant hinc inde "candidati (says Ammianus) ut fugientium molem tamquam "ruinam maiè compositi culminis declinaret: et incertum subita "*equestris* hasta cute brachii ejus præstricta, costis perfossis "hæsit in ima jecoris fibra." Lib. xxv. c. iii. But what shall we say to the emperor's own testimony; who, in his dying harangue, returns thanks to God for not suffering him to fall by *secret conspiracy*?—"Ideoque sempiternum veneror numen quod "*non clandestinis insidiis*, nec longa morborum asperitate, vel "damnatorum fine decedo: sed in medio cursu florentium glori-"arum hunc merui *clarum* e mundo *digressum*." Id. ib. And this testimony will be seen to have the more weight, if we consider,

that Julian having (as in this place he tells us) consulted the oracle about his fate, was answered, that he should *fall by the sword*—" interiturum me ferro dudum didici fide fatidica præci-" nente." Id. ib. The ambiguity of which answer would naturally make him as vigilant against his personal enemies, as against the enemies of the state. So that when he calls his death *clarum digressum*, we may take his word for it, that he knew it to be by the darts of the Persians.

Yet Libanius, we see, brings a formal charge against the Christians, of a pretended assassinate; and offered himself as the prosecutor, to make it good. What evidence he had in reserve is hard to say: But, in his *Oration to revenge the death* of his master, having related that Sapor, willing to recompense the hand which had worked his deliverance, had published a reward which nobody came in to receive, and from thence had concluded, that Julian must have fallen by one of his own soldiers; Libanius, I say, calls this the strongest proof of all, τὸ δὲ μέγιστον ἀπάντων. And it was no wonder he rated it so high: for when he composed his *funeral oration on the death of Julian*, he was so unfurnished on this head, that he takes it for granted his master was slain by a *Persian horseman*, ὑπ' Ἀχαιμενίδου τινὸς κατενήνεχθαι.—At that time, he seemed to think with Eutropius, Marcellinus, and every other reasonable man, that the circumstance of the reward's being unclaimed, was so far from being extraordinary, that it was not to be expected a particular stroke should be distinguished amidst a general flight of darts and arrows. A great poet, long before, in the description of a battle, had feigned the same accident: but he had too much good sense to suppose so unlikely a circumstance attending it, as that the author of the stroke was either distinguished by others, or conscious of it himself:

" Ecce, viro stridens alis allapsa sagitta est,
" Incertum qua pulsa manu, quo turbine adacta;
" Quis tantam Rutilis laudem, casusne deusne,
" Attulerit pressa est insignis gloria facti;
" NEC SESE ÆNEÆ JACTAVIT VOLNERE QUISQUAM."

But, you will say, Libanius was better informed when he wrote the *Oration to revenge his death*. Be it so. It is certain, however,

ever, he does no honour to his information; neither in the matter, nor in the composition of that piece; it being indeed one of the meanest and most disingenuous discourses of all antiquity: and, in every respect, so pitiful, that, had the reasoning and rhetoric belonged to a *Father*, our anti-ecclesiastics could not have desired a better fund for their mirth and raillery.

On the whole, this calumny seems to have had its birth from a stratagem of Sapor to throw the Roman army into discord and confusion, when, on the death of Julian, he found it was not like to become so easy a prey to him, as he expected. It is probable he published the reward, spoken of above, without affectation or design: but no one coming to lay in his claim, he found a good use might be made of it; and so gave out, That Julian must needs be slain by a Roman soldier, since, after the most diligent search amongst his own troops, there was no one that pretended to the merit of his death. That this report might make its due impression, he ordered the Persians (who were then harassing the Romans) whenever they came up within hearing of the enemy, to reproach them with the murder of their master: it was in prosecution of the same scheme, that when the ambassadors, whom Jovian sent to treat of peace, came to their audience. The first question he asked them was, Whether Julian's death had been yet revenged. But why so much solicitude in a matter he had no concern in: and so much resentment of an action he had reaped such advantages from, if he did not expect, by this affected generosity, to reap greater? Every man of sense in the army treated this artifice as it deserved: and hence, without doubt, the neglect shewn to it by Eutropius and Marcellinus. Nor is this a stratagem unusual in war. Our Henry V. employed it with success after the battle of Azincourt, to appease the duke of Burgundy, when he sent the king his gantlet by an herald (the declaration of war in those times) to revenge the death of his two brothers, who fell in that action fighting on the side of Charles VI. For, unwilling to bring down upon himself so powerful an enemy, but principally desirous of inflaming the distracted councils of France, he took advantage of the quarrels between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans, to assure the herald that the duke's brothers were not killed by the English troops,

but by those of their own party, in the faction of Orleans: of which, he said, he would produce evidence, and make good his allegation to the full. But he performed his word just as Sapor did his, of the assassinate of Julian: where (to return to our subject) the pretence was so gross and ridiculous, that it is probable we had heard no more of it, had it not been for the delusion of some Christians, who, being on the hunt after miracles, catched at the circumstance of the dart's coming from an unknown hand, to make a miracle of the apostate's death. Henceforward the fable received new vigour; and soon after, a kind of establishment, from the strange indiscretion of Sozomene, who would needs venture to defend the *morality* of this pretended assassinate: a rashness which did the faithful more dishonour than all the contrivances of Julian against them. And yet, to do justice to every one, the folly, to speak no worse of it, is not to be charged on the Christian principles, but on the Pagan; which Sozomene would not suffer his Christianity to correct; for the cutting off a tyrant was one of the most illustrious of the Pagan virtues; and unhappily our church-historian seems to have been struck with the glory attending that atchievement.

CONCLUSION.

WE shall conclude with a short recapitulation of the whole argument.

First, It hath been shewn, That the *occasion* was most important; and that the credit and honour of Revelation required God's interposition at this juncture.

That Julian aggravated the impiety of his attempt, by all the insulting circumstances most likely to bring upon him the vengeance of heaven.

That the *event* is established by all the power of human testimony: That the church hath borne witness to it by a full, consistent, and contemporary evidence.

That the adversaries of our holy Faith, who were in the neighbourhood of the scene, the followers of Julian, and most partial to his views, have confirmed their report. Nay, that the emperor himself hath confessed the hand which overcame him, though with that disingenuity which characterises the *sophist* and the *bigot*, in what party soever they are found.

And lastly, That the *fact* was, in its nature, such as least admitted of unfaithful accounts concerning it.

Then the OBJECTIONS to the miracle have been considered.

It hath been shewn, that, from the word of PROPHECY, and the course of God's dispensations, his interposition was even *necessary* to support the honour of Religion.

That the evidence of the historian, AMM. MARCELLINUS, is so full and perfect in all its parts, that there is not one circumstance in his character or testimony,

mony, which an unbeliever could abuse, to keep back his assent; nor any wanting, which a Believer would desire, to prevent a cavil.

That the several accounts of the FATHERS *of the Church* and the *Ecclesiastical Historians* are not only consistent with, but highly corroborative of, one another; and, that such parts of their relations as appear at first sight most prodigious, are indeed, when maturely examined, the parts which most deserve credit.

That it is very unlikely, nay almost impossible, that the eruption should be the effect of *human* ART *and contrivance.*

And lastly, that it is no less absurd to suppose it a NATURAL *event.*

Thus new light continually springing up from each circumstance as it passed in review; by such time as the whole was considered, this illustrious MIRACLE hath come out in one full blaze of evidence. Insomuch, that I will venture to affirm, there is nothing to be opposed to its force, but what must at the same time destroy the credit of all human testimony whatsoever.

When, therefore, the Reader reflects, how little this invincible demonstration for our holy Faith hath been hitherto insisted on; how slightly it hath been handled; and how hastily and slovenly hurried over; he will possibly find cause to wonder as much, on the one hand, at this strange inattention, as on the other, at the unreasonable credulity of the blind adorers of antiquity. For though it hath ever affected the learned and impartial observer with the superiority of its evidence, yet no one before, that I know of, hath attempted to set that superiority in a just light, though provoked to it by the insolence of our enemies, and, what is still more provoking, the indiscretion of our FRIENDS:

FRIENDS: some of whom have hinted their suspicions in private; and others given more open intimations of its falsehood.

This, in part, may be owing to those ticklish circumstances in the evidence of the *Fathers*, which, on examination, we have shewn to be its principal support. But what hath chiefly occasioned this neglect, I am persuaded, is the state and condition of the *Ecclesiastical History* of that time; when the light of miracles was surrounded with such a swarm of monkish fables, as was enough to darken the brightest of its rays; and, indeed, nothing, but the force of its divine extraction, could ever have broke through them: for, as if these unhappy artificers *designed* what they brought to pass, they were not content to counterfeit the hand of God on other common occasions: they would try their skill on *this*, where it had been so eminently displayed; and actually contrived to mimic its most essential and triumphant circumstances. Accordingly, *Church History* informs us, that when Julian and his brother Gallus projected to build a *temple* over the sepulchre of one St. Mamas; that part which Julian undertook *fell down again* as soon as built; the saint, it seems, disdaining the service of the future apostate. The cloudy monk, who invented this fable, had, we see, two conceits in his head: he would make Julian's offering as unacceptable as Cain's; and resolving likewise, he should be an unlucky builder through life, would not give him the skill or privilege of that primitive out-law. The same *History* again informs us*, That once, when Julian sacrificed, there was found impressed upon the entrails of the victim, *a cross within a crown or circle*: for when the monks had once got the apostate into their hands, they treated

* Greg. Naz. Orat. iii. Soz. l. v. c. 2.

him

him as a true Demoniac; and so plied him with CROSSES, that sovereign Panacea of the Exorcists.

Thus they dressed up their impostures as like as they could, in garb and fashion, to the miracles of heavenly extraction; with the spirit, or, must we say, in *imitation* of those Pagan priests, who forged their *Ancilia* to secure the SACRED SHIELD which fell from heaven: as if they had taken it into their heads, that true miracles, unattended with these delusions, were in the same danger from the enemies of the Faith, that the *Palladium* of *Rome* was from robbers, without a numerous guard of brazen counterfeits.

END

OF TREATISE

ON JULIAN'S ATTEMPT TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE.

THE

DOCTRINE OF GRACE;

OR,

THE OFFICE AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
VINDICATED

FROM THE INSULTS OF INFIDELITY

AND

THE ABUSES OF FANATICISM:

WITH

SOME THOUGHTS

(Humbly offered to the Consideration of the Established Clergy)

REGARDING

THE RIGHT METHOD OF DEFENDING RELIGION
AGAINST THE ATTACKS OF EITHER PARTY.

IN THREE BOOKS.

1750.

ADVERTISEMENT to the First Edition.

PREFACE.

BOOK I. - - - containing Chaps. I. to X.

BOOK II. - - - - - - - Chaps. I. to XII.

BOOK III. - - - - - - - Chaps. I. II. & III.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

WHILE I was composing these sheets to vindicate the honour of Religion, it was given out, that I was writing in defence of a late Minister of State.

I have a Master above, and I have one below; I mean GOD, and the KING. To them my services are bound.

The most sacred of all private ties are *Friendship* and *Gratitude*. The duties arising from these, though not altogether so extensive as the other, are subservient only to them.

With respect to the great Minister here understood, His vindication, had he wanted any, could come, with proper dignity, only from himself. And he, though for the first time, would be here but a Copier: I mean, of the example of that First of Romans *; who being calumniated before the people by one Nævius, an obscure Plebeian, when he came to make his defence, which happened to be on the anniversary of the battle of Zama, addressed the assembly in this manner: "It "was on this day, Romans, that I subdued your mighty "Rival for Empire, the Carthaginian. Ill would it "become the friends of Rome to waste such a day in "wrangling and contention. We should now be re-"turning thanks to the immortal Gods for the signal

* Scipio Africanus; who restored his country by carrying the war from Rome to Carthage.

"protection

" protection they afforded us in that glorious conflict. " Let us leave then this fellow with himself, and ascend " together to the capitol, to offer to Jupiter the " Deliverer; who, on all occasions as well as this, " hath, from my early youth, vouchsafed to bestow " upon me the growing power and the constant dis- " position to support the honour of my country. And " let no God, auspicious to Rome, be left uninvoked, " that the State, in its distresses, may never want such " servants as I have still endeavoured to approve " myself." When he had said this, he stept from the rostrum, and left the forum empty; all the people following him to the capitol.

That *the people followed him* is not surely the marvellous part of the story. The thing to be admired is, that a Statesman should lead the people to prayers.

This indeed is the last service a Patriot-minister can render to his country. And I am well persuaded (so exactly does the example fit the occasion) that our illustrious Modern would have deemed it the crown of his labours to have animated his Fellow-citizens with a spirit of true piety towards GOD, as successfully as he inflamed them with a spirit of zeal and fortitude for the King and Constitution.

PREFACE

TO

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE.

THE CONTEMPT of *Religion* soon followed the ABUSE; and both of them have existed almost ever since the first institution of the thing itself. For, that corruption of heart, whose disorder *Religion* was ordained to cure, has been ever struggling against its Remedy.

I. In the days of Solomon, when *Wisdom* was at its height, *Folly*, as we learn from many passages in the writings of that sacred sage, kept equal paces with it. Hence it is, that, after he has given many lively paintings of the deformed features of Irreligion and Bigotry, he subjoins directions to the sober advocate of Piety and Virtue, how best to repress their insolence and vanity. ANSWER NOT *a fool* (says he) *according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.* ANSWER *a Fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit* *.

Short, isolated sentences were the mode in which ancient wisdom delighted to convey its precepts for the regulation of human conduct. But when this natural method had lost the grace of novelty, and a growing refinement had new-coloured the candid simplicity of ancient manners, these instructive sages found a necessity of giving to their moral maxims the seasoning and poignancy of *paradoxes*. In these lively and useful sports of fancy, the son of David, we are told,

* Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.

most excelled. We find them to abound in the writings which bear his name; and we meet with frequent allusions to them in all the parts of sacred Writ, under the names of *Riddles*, *Parables*, and *Dark-sayings*.

Now of all the examples of this species of instruction, there is none more illustrious, or fuller of moral wisdom, than the *paradox* just now quoted; or which, in the happiness of the expression, has so artfully conveyed the key for opening the treasures of it. But as a *dark* conceit and a *dull* one have a great proximity in modern wit; and a nice *difference* is not distinguished from a *contradiction* in modern reasoning; this paradox of the Sage has been mistaken by his critics for an absurdity of some of his transcribers, who forgot the negative in the latter member of the sentence: and so, to be set right at an easier expence than unfolding *dark sentences of old*; that is to say, by exchanging them for *clearer*, of a *modern* date: which *time* can make ANCIENT READINGS; and which a careful collation of its blunders may hereafter make the TRUE.

II. But they who chuse to receive antiquity in its antique garb, will, perhaps, venture with me to try, if the apparent contradiction in the received text cannot be fairly unriddled without any other aid than of the words themselves, in which the *dark saying* is conveyed.

Had the *folly* of these *fools* been only of one condition or denomination, then the advice *to answer*, and *not to answer*, had been repugnant to itself. But as their *folly* was of various kinds, in some of which, *to answer* might offend the dignity, and in others, *not to answer* might hurt the interests of Truth; *To answer*, and *not to answer*, is a consistent, and may, for aught these critics know, be a very wise direction.

Had the advice been given simply and without circumstance, *to answer the fool*, and *not to answer him*, a critic, who had a reverence for the text, would satisfy himself in supposing, that the different directions referred to the doing a thing *in and out of season*. But when, to the general advice about *answering*, this circumstance is added—*according to his folly*, that interpretation is excluded; and a difficulty indeed arises; a difficulty, which has made those who have no reverence for the TEXT, to accuse it of absurdity and contradiction.

But now, to each direction, reasons are subjoined, Why a *Fool should*, and why he *should not*, *be answered:* reasons, which, when set together and compared, are, at first sight, sufficient to make the critic suspect, that all the contradiction lies in his own incumbered ideas.

1. The reason given, why *a Fool should not be answered according to his folly*, is, *lest he* [the Answerer] *be like unto him:*

2. The reason given, why *he should be answered according to his folly*, is, *lest he* [the Fool] *be wise in his own conceit.*

The cause assigned, of *forbidding to answer*, therefore, plainly insinuates, that the Defender of Religion should not imitate the insulter of it in his *modes of disputation*; which may be comprised in *sophistry*, *buffoonry*, and *scurrility*. For what could so much *liken* the answerer to his idiot-adversary, as the putting on his fool's-coat in order to captivate and confound the rabble?

The cause assigned, of *directing to answer*, as plainly intimates, that the Sage should address himself to confute the fool upon *the fool's own false principles*,

by shewing that they lead to conclusions very wide from the impieties he would deduce from them. And if any thing will prevent the *fool* from being *wise in his own conceit*, it must be the dishonour and the ridicule of having his own principles turned against him; while they are shewn to make for the very contrary purpose to that for which he had employed them.

The supreme wisdom, conveyed in the two precepts of this unravelled *paradox*, will be best understood by explaining the advantages arising from the observance of each of them.

III. We are *not to answer a fool according to his folly, lest we also be like unto him*—This is the reason given; and a good one it is; sufficient to make any sober man decline a combat, where even victory would bring dishonour with it. Now, if our *answer* be of such a nature that we also (though with contrary intentions) do injury to truth, we become *like unto him* in the essential part of his character. And surely Truth is never more grossly abused, nor its advocates more dishonoured, than when they employ the foolish arts of *sophistry*, *buffoonry*, and *scurrility*, in its defence.

1. To use *fallacious* and inconclusive arguments in support of Truth, is doing it infinite discredit. The practice tends to make men suspect that the questioned Truth is indeed an imposture, when it finds support in the common tricks of impostors: the least unfavourable inference will be, that the Truth is defended not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Defender: this will make the serious inquirer less attentive to the issue, and more jealous of the good faith of the advocate; which cannot but lessen our reverence to the one, and increase unfavourable prejudices towards the other.

other. It tends to reduce the two parties of *Wisdom* and *Folly* to a level; when they stand on the same barren and deceitful ground. It tends to confound the distinction between *true* and *false*, and to make all terminate in that most malignant species of *folly*, Pyrrhonic doubt and uncertainty.

2. To employ *Buffoonry* in this service, is to violate the majesty of Truth, which can inforce its influence amongst men no longer than while its sanctity of character is kept safe from insult.

Buffoonry deprives Truth of the only thing she wants, in order to come off victorious; I mean, a *fair hearing*. To *examine*, Men must be serious; and to *judge*, they must be attentive to the argument. Buffoonry gives a levity to the mind, which makes it seek entertainment rather than instruction, in all that is offered to its inspection. But let this poor talent be taken at its utmost worth, the use of it will still raise a suspicion, that the advocate has his cause little at heart, while, in the very heat of an important controversy, he can allow himself to be amused and diverted by the levity of false wit; since, in matters that are understood to concern us most, we are wont to appear, as well as to be, most in earnest: and this scandal given by the advocate, will always do prejudice to the cause.

3. Again, *personal abuse*, that favourite *colour* which glares most in the fool's *rhetoric*, is carefully to be avoided. For nothing can so assimilate the answerer to the fool he is confuting, as a want of *charity*, which this mode of defence so openly betrays. To *charity*, the fool makes no pretensions. His very attempt is an avowed violation of it. He would deprive the world of what he himself confesses to be most useful

to society, and most pleasing to the natural sentiments of man; that is to say, *religion.* He would break down this barrier against evil, he would rob us of this consolation of humanity; and in such a service he follows but his nature and his office, when he vilifies and calumniates all who set themselves to oppose his impious projects. But the *end of the Commandment is charity.*

These are the various modes of *answering* which are to be avoided, lest the advocate of religion become *like* the impious caviller whom he addresses himself to confute.

IV. But then, *lest the fool should be wise in his own conceit,* we are, at the same time, bid, *to give him an answer.* But how can this be done, in the manner here directed, namely, *according to his folly,* and yet the answerer not become *like unto him,* but, on the contrary, be able to produce the effect here intimated? The cure of the fool's vain conceit of his superior wisdom, is a difficulty indeed; a difficulty worthy the advocate of truth to undertake: and which a master of his subject may hope to overcome, in contriving to confute the fool on his own *false principles,* by shewing that they lead to a conclusion very opposite to those free consequences he has laboured to deduce from them. And if any thing will allay the *fool*'s vain *conceit* of himself, it must be the sense of such a dishonour. For what can be more shameful than to have his own principles shewn to be destructive of his own conclusions? What more mortifying, than to have those principles, in whose invention he so much gloried, or in whose use he so much confided, fairly turned, by all the rules of good logic, to his own confusion? Nor is the partisan of falsehood more humbled than the cause

of

of truth advanced, by thus answering a fool *according to his folly*. For that victory where the adversary is thus made to contribute to his own overthrow is, in common estimation, always held to be most compleat: that system being naturally deemed contemptible, whose most plausible support draws after it the ruin of what it was raised to uphold.

And thus, as the *wise man* directs, is this forward fool to be treated; whether it be by *silence* or *confutation*.

V. That, in general, his folly is to be repressed, *according to the dictates of* true *wisdom*, the nature of the thing sufficiently informs us: there was no need of a particular direction to inforce the expediency and necessity of such a conduct. But then, besides, it may sometimes happen, that the interests of truth require his being *answered* even *according to his folly*: and, as our duty here is very liable to *abuse*, it was expedient to obviate the danger. This, we may observe, the sacred writer hath done; and with much art and elegance of address.

It may indeed be said, Why this practised obliquity in defence of truth? Is not the purity of her nature rather defiled, than her real interests advanced by this indirection? And does not wisdom seem to tell us, that it becomes her dignity to repress folly by those arms only which wisdom herself hath edged and tempered; that truth, by the information of her own light, points out the straight road to her abode; and forbids us to riggle into her sacred presence through by-paths, and the cloudy medium of falsehood?

But they who talk thus do not sufficiently reflect on the condition of our weak and purblind nature, which can ill bear the bright and unshaded light of truth. On

which account, it is so contrived, in the beautiful order of things, that *folly*, by thus administering to her own defeat, should bring us back again into the ways of wisdom, from which she hath seduced us.

The REDEEMER of mankind, in condescension to the infirmities of those he came to save, hath taken this very advantage of that established order: for, more effectually to silence those *fools* who questioned his mission and his office, he *answers them according to their folly*; that is, he demonstrates to them, on their own erroneous ideas of the nature and end of the LAW (formed on rabbinical traditions and the reveries of Greek philosophers), he demonstrates to them, I say, the truth and reasonableness of the GOSPEL. The pure and unabated splendor of truth, ushered in by wisdom, would have only added to their judicial blindness: for to bear it undazzled, they had need of the presence of that SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which was not yet come, but only promised to be sent. Indeed, when this sacred guide was come, and while he continued in an *extraordinary* manner, to enlighten the understandings of the faithful, there was no occasion for this inforced ministry of *folly*, to contribute to her own destruction. And therefore the *first* propagators of the Gospel proceeded more directly to the establishment of the truth, and on the solid principles of *wisdom* only. Yet now again, in the *ordinary* communications of GRACE, this direction of the *wise man* will be as useful as ever, to the interests of virtue and religion, ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

THE

DOCTRINE OF GRACE;

OR,

THE OFFICE AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

THE Blessed JESUS came into the world ON THE PART OF GOD, to declare pardon and salvation to the forfeited posterity of Adam. He testified the truth of his Mission by amazing miracles, and sealed man's Redemption, in his Blood, by the more amazing sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

But as the REDEMPTION, so procured, could only operate on each individual, under certain conditions of FAITH and OBEDIENCE, very repugnant to our corrupt nature, the blessed Redeemer, on leaving the world, promised to his followers his intercession with the Father, to send amongst them another divine Person ON THE PART OF MAN, namely the HOLY GHOST, called the *Spirit of Truth*, and the *Comforter*; who, agreeably to the import of these attributes, should co-operate with man in establishing his FAITH, and in perfecting his OBEDIENCE; or, in other words, should *sanctify him to Redemption.*

This

This is a succinct account of the economy of Grace; entirely consonant to our most approved conceptions of the Divine nature and of the human condition. For if man was to be reinstated in a FREE-GIFT, which had been justly forfeited, we cannot but confess, that as, on the one hand, the restoration might be made on what conditions best pleased the giver; so, on the other, that God would graciously provide that it should not be made in vain.

An atonement, therefore, for the offended Majesty of the FATHER, was first to be procured; and this was the work of the SON: and then, a remedy was to be provided for that helpless condition of man, which hindered the atonement from producing its effect; and this was the office of the HOLY GHOST: so that both were joint-workers in the great business of reconciling God to man.

What at present I propose to consider is, the *Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit*, as they are delivered to us in sacred Scripture.

His office in general is, as hath been observed, to establish our *faith*, and to perfect our *obedience*, both of which he doth by ENLIGHTENING THE UNDERSTANDING, and by RECTIFYING THE WILL. All this is necessarily collected from the words of Jesus, which contain this important PROMISE. *I will pray the Father* (says he) *and he shall give you another* COMFORTER, *that he may abide with you for ever; even the* SPIRIT OF TRUTH—*He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you—which is the* HOLY GHOST, *whom the Father shall send in my name. He shall* TEACH YOU ALL THINGS*.

By *teaching us all things* under the joint characters of the *Spirit of Truth* and of the *Comforter*, we are

* John xiv. 16, &c. *seq.*

necessarily

necessarily to understand *all things* which concern FAITH and OBEDIENCE.

These two distinct branches of his office I shall consider in their order. *

CHAP. II.

FIRST of all, let us observe the method employed by Divine Wisdom in manifesting the operations of the HOLY GHOST, as the SPIRIT AND GUIDE OF TRUTH *.

The first extraordinary attestation of his descent was at the day of Pentecost, in the GIFT OF TONGUES.

Besides the great and almost indispensable use of this endowment on the first disciples of Christ, who were to convey the glad tidings of the Gospel throughout the whole earth; the elegance and propriety in the choice of this miracle, to attest the real descent of that *Spirit* who was to *teach us all things*, can never be enough admired: for WORDS being the human vehicle of our knowledge, this gift was the fittest precursor of the *Spirit of Truth*.

But this first opening scene of wonders, which was to prepare and influence all their subsequent labours, a late eminent Writer would, from a SIGN, reduce to a *shadow*; in which he seems to think, fancy set itself on work, to produce a prodigy. "The gift of tongues "upon the day of Pentecost (says the learned person) "*was not lasting, but instantaneous and transitory*; "not bestowed upon them for the constant work of "the ministry, but as an *occasional sign only*, that "the person endowed with it was a chosen minister of "the Gospel: which sign, as soon as it had served that

* John xvi. 13.

"particular

" particular purpose, seems to have ceased, and " totally to have vanished *."

Let us examine now the grounds of this new interpretation, so apparently derogatory to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The learned writer proceeds in order; first, to *reduce* the type or visible sign of the gift, the FIERY TONGUES: for having declared the gift itself to be instantaneous and transitory, he has, very consistently, endeavoured to shew that the *sign* of it was merely fanciful. He explains it to be no more than a sudden flash of lightning, " which, he says, like all other " phænomena of that sort, no sooner appeared, than " vanished †."

His reason for this opinion is, " because when the " Disciples spoke in strange tongues to the multi- " tude, the conclusion they drew from that circum- " stance seems to shew, that the celestial fire did not, " at that time, sit upon their heads ‡."

But the learned person has omitted to bring this other circumstance into his account, that when the *cloven tongues appeared upon each of them*, they were assembled together in a private room, sequestered and apart: and that it was not till the thing was *noised abroad*, and the *multitude come together*, to inquire into the truth of it, that the apostles *spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance*. Now between this visible descent of the Holy Spirit, and their speaking to the multitude, a considerable time must have intervened; sufficient to convince the apostles, from the steady duration of the appearance, that it was not natural, but miraculous. And this the original words

* Dr. Middleton's Essay on the Gift of Tongues, vol. ii. of his works, p. 79.

† P. 81. ‡ P. 82.

well

well express: ἐκάθισέ τε ἐφ' ἕνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, properly rendered by the phrase of SITTING *upon each of them:* words so inconsistent with a momentary appearance, that it would be trifling with common sense to deduce such an interpretation from oblique circumstances and collateral reasoning. It is true the learned writer concedes, even from the sign's being only *a sudden flash, which vanished almost as soon as it appeared,* that "it indicated something miraculous and super-"natural*." But I am afraid, that those who are the readiest to embrace his physiology, will not be the first to admire his theology; especially as it is so gratuitously deduced. It may therefore not be improper to consider the evangelical account of this visible descent, with a little more exactness. In this place (we see) the *fiery tongues* are said, to *sit upon each of them:* and other places of Scripture, which mention the like descent of the Holy Spirit in visible form, describe it in such terms as denote a very different appearance from a sudden *flash of lightning.* St. Matthew tells us, that *the Spirit of God descended like a dove,* ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν; that is, with a dove-like motion; as birds, when about to settle upon any thing, first hover over it with quivering wings: it then *lighted upon Jesus,* ἐρχόμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν. So, in the place in question, the same Spirit is said to descend under the appearance of *cloven tongues, like as of fire,* ὡσεὶ πυρός. In the former instance, only the *motion* of the descent is described: in this, both the *motion, figure,* and *colour.* And the term of *cloven tongues,* which the sacred historian employs to describe the *motion,* and which the learned writer takes up, to prove his hypothesis of a momentary existence of the phænomenon, proves it, in truth, to be of some con-

* P. 82.

tinuance.

tinuance. "We cannot (says he) think it strange "that fire flashing from Heaven, and suddenly vanish-"ing, should yield some resemblance of *tongues* to "the eyes of the MULTITUDE; for this is no more "than what is *natural*, and what we may observe, "in some measure, from every flame that flashes "from the clouds, and breaks itself, *of course*, in a "number of small pointed particles not remote from "that shape *."

To this, let us, in the first place, observe, that the thing seen, ὡσεὶ πυρὸς, on the heads of the apostles, was no more an elementary *fire*, than the thing seen, ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν, on the head of Jesus, was a real *dove*: for, as only a *dove-like motion* is intimated in this latter expression, so only a *flame-like motion* is intimated in the former; and what this was, the historian tells us in its effect, the *appearance of cloven tongues*. The learned person is certainly mistaken in supposing *a sudden flash of lightning* has *naturally* the appearance of cloven tongues. Such a phænomenon exhibits to the eye of the beholder only a line of light angularly broken into several directions; very different from the form of *tongues*, whether whole or *cloven*. Whenever a flame assumes this appearance, it is become *stationary*, as this was, which, the historian says, SAT *upon each of them*, ἐκάθισε: and then its *natural* motion being upwards, it represents, when divided lengthwise, a pyramidal or *tongue-like* figure, *cloven*. A demonstration that the appearance in question was not *momentary*, but of some continuance.

The learned writer having thus accounted for the precursor of the gift, comes to consider the gift itself; and attempts to shew that "the chief or SOLE END "RATHER of the *gift of tongues* was to serve as a

* P. 82.

"sensible

" sensible sign in that *infirm state* of the first Chris-
" tians, that those to whom it was vouchsafed were
" under a divine influence, and acted by a divine com-
" mission.—So that it is not reasonable to think that
" this *diversity of tongues* was given to the apostles
" for the sake of converting those people before whom
" they then spoke *." Hence (says he) " it appears
" that the gift was not of a stable or permanent na-
" ture †."—That is, it was no lasting endowment, to enable the apostles to perform their ministry amongst those whose language they had never learnt; but, a momentary power, which served that day for a *sign* to the multitude: and consequently, they had these languages to learn anew when they wanted the use of them. This, I say, appears to be his inference; for the arguments he brings to support his principle will lead us to no other. At the same time it must be observed, he has laid down the proposition so loosely and ambiguously, that, when considered alone, it may either mean, " that the power of speaking strange languages was only infused occasionally, like the power of working miracles;" or else, " that the knowledge of the language, when infused, was not lasting, but momentary, like the cloven tongues; the inspired linguist presently falling back into his natural state of idiotism."

In the first sense, the assertion seems to be well founded: and from its sobriety, and more especially from the extravagance of the other meaning, which leaves but little distinction between the power of speaking strange tongues at the day of Pentecost, and the ecstatic ravings of modern fanatics, one would wish to find was the sense we could fairly ascribe to it.

* P. 87. † P. 89.

But

But then all the arguments employed by the learned person, for the support of his proposition, confine us, as we shall now see, to the other meaning.

1. His first argument is the *authority* of some modern critics *. But I may be excused, if I suffer these to have no more weight with me when they contradict a received interpretation, than they usually have with him when they confirm it.

2. His second argument is an inference from Scripture itself. "It appears (he thinks) from the stories of Cornelius's family, and the disciples at Ephesus (both of whom spoke with tongues on the Holy Ghost's descending on them, while Peter preached to one, and Paul baptized the other), that the gift was not lasting, but instantaneous; and given only for a sign of their real admission into the church of Christ:" for, as he truly observes, "here was no room to "suppose another use, the several assemblies being "all of the same speech and language †."

But here the learned person from particular cases draws a general inference: because, in this case, he *sees no other use* than for a *sign*, he concludes the gift to be momentary in all other. By a better way of reasoning therefore, he will suffer us to conclude, that where we do *see another use*, as in the gift at Pentecost, that there it was as lasting as the use to which it served: and an equitable judge will conclude for us both, that the same endowment which in one instance was transitory, might, in another, last for life.

The converts of the family of Cornelius, and the [illegible]t Ephesus, were in a private station in the [illegible]hat an instantaneous exercise of the power

* P. 89. † P. 85, 86.

fully

fully answered its end: it was a *sign* that these converts were indeed become members of Christ's mystical body, the church, as well by the baptism of the Spirit as of Water. But the case was different with respect to the apostles: they were the appointed preachers of the Gospel to remote and barbarous nations: an office not to be discharged without a competent knowledge of the various languages of the earth. We find them, on the day of Pentecost, miraculously endowed with this knowledge. What are we to think, but that the PRINCIPAL end of the gift was to qualify them for their mission?

3. The learned writer's third argument in support of his opinion, is taken from the style of Scripture, and is to this purpose: "that were the gift of tongues lasting, it would have been employed in the composition of their *gospels* and *epistles*: but that it was not there employed, appears from the barbarity of the style; since whatever comes from God must be perfect in its kind; so that, in this case, we should be sure to find the purity of Plato, and the eloquence of Cicero." But the consideration of this argument coming more properly under another head of this discourse, for that we shall reserve it; and might here take leave of this subject, *the duration of the gift of tongues*; as the common opinion remains unimpaired by his attack, and is still in possession of all the circumstances of credit in which he found it.

CHAP. III.

YET since this new interpretation (which makes the gift so transitory, and the power conferred by it so momentary) may be applied by licentious men to

purposes the learned person might never intend, it cannot be too carefully considered.

Who hath not heard of the wondrous powers of the imagination, when raised and inflamed by fanaticism? and though we be ignorant of its utmost force, yet we know enough of it to convince us, that this faculty of the mind, the nurse and parent of enthusiasm, is able to put on every form of preternatural semblance. There are many well-attested cases in modern history (although we should agree that they have lost nothing of the marvellous in the telling), where enthusiasts, in their ecstasies, have talked very fluently in the learned languages, of which they had a very imperfect knowledge in their sober intervals. "When I saw (says "the noble author of the *Characteristics)* the gen-"tleman, who has writ lately in defence of revived "prophecy (and has since fallen himself into the "prophetic ecstasies) lately under an *agitation* (as "they call it) uttering prophecy in a pompous Latin "style, of which out of his ecstasy, it seems, he is "wholly incapable, it brought into my mind the "Latin poet's description of the Sibyl *," &c. And it is remarkable, that instances of this kind have occurred so frequently, that Thyræus, a famous Popish exorcist, as blinded as he was by the superstitious impiety of demoniacal possessions, has, in his *Directory*, expressly declared it to be the common opinion of his brotherhood, that the *speaking strange languages* is no certain sign of a *possession*, and warns the exorcist against this illusion †.

Now were it generally believed that the *speaking with strange tongues* in the first ages of Christianity, was a mere fleeting, transitory power, the bold licence of

* Letter concerning Enthusiasm, § 6.

† De Dæmoniacis, c. xxii.

our

our times would be ready to conclude that it was much of the same kind with these feats of modern fanatics. For let us consider how the matter would be thought to stand, on the representation of this learned writer: a sudden flash of lightning, under the fancied figure of *cloven tongues*, kindles the fiery imaginations of a number of enthusiastic men, met together in a tumultuary assembly, and inflaming one another's fanaticism by mutual collision; and in this temper, *they began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

I shall therefore endeavour to shew, in the last place, that this new interpretation contradicts what SCRIPTURE itself expressly delivers of the USE, and, by necessary inference, of the *duration* of this *gift of tongues* on the day of Pentecost.

The learned writer affirms, "that this knowledge was transitory, serving only for an occasional sign, and not intended for the use of the apostolic mission." Now Jesus himself tells us, that it was intended for this use: who, on his leaving the world, comforts his disciples with this promise:——*But ye shall receive* POWER, *after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be* WITNESSES *unto me, unto the* UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH *, recorded by the evangelic writer, as an introduction to his narrative of the miraculous gift of tongues; which he considers as the completion of this promise; and that the *power to be received*, was the *power* then given: the use of which, as we see, was to enable the disciples to become *witnesses unto him, unto the uttermost part of the earth.* We find St. Paul had this *power*, not only in the fullest measure, but in a proportionable duration; for, endeavouring to moderate the excessive value which the Corinthians set upon *spiritual gifts*, he observes, that,

* Acts i. 8.

with regard to the most splendid of them, the *gift of tongues*, he himself had the advantage of them all—*I thank my God* (says he) *that I speak with tongues more than you all* *. The occasion shews that he considered this his acquirement as a *spiritual gift*: and his using the *present time*, shews that he boasted of it as then in his possession. But why did he speak with more tongues than all of them? For a good reason; he was the peculiar apostle of the Gentiles; and was to preach the Gospel amongst remote and barbarous nations. Whom then shall we believe? Shall we take his word who promised the gift; shall we take his, on whom it was bestowed; or shall we prefer to both, the conjectures of this learned and ingenious modern?

Would reason or the truth of things suffer us to be so compliant, we might concede to unbelievers all which they fancy the learned writer hath procured for them, "that the power of tongues was temporary, and, like the power of healing, possessed occasionally," without being alarmed at any consequence they will be able to deduce from it. For let it but be granted (and they must grant it, or prevaricate) that the gift of tongues returned as often as they had occasion for it; and it is no great matter where the power resided in the mean time.

But neither reason nor the truth of things will suffer us to be thus compliant. The power of healing or of working miracles (to which the learned writer compares the gift of tongues) is, during the whole course of its operation, one continued arrest or diversion of the general laws of matter and motion: it was therefore fitting that this power should be given occasionally. But the *speaking with tongues*, when once the gift was conferred, became, from thenceforth, a natural power;

* 1 Cor. xiv. 18.—μᾶλλον γλώσσαις λαλῶν.

just

just as the free and perfect use of the members of the body, after they have been restored, by miracle, to the exercise of their natural functions. Indeed, to have *lost* the gift of tongues after this temporary use of it, would imply another miracle; for it must have been by actual deprivation, unless we suppose the apostles mere irrational organs through which divine sounds were conveyed. In a word, it was as much in the course of nature for an apostle, whom the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost had enabled to speak a strange language, ever afterwards to have the use of that language, as it was for the cripple, whom Jesus had restored to the use of his limbs on the Sabbath-day, ever afterwards to walk, run, and perform all the functions of a man perfectly sound and whole. In one thing, indeed, the power of healing, and of speaking with strange tongues coincided; as the disciples could not heal at all times, so neither could they speak at all times in what unknown dialect they should choose to converse: Yet when once, by the Holy Spirit, they had been enabled to speak and understand a language, they could not but retain the use of it, with the same facility as if they had acquired it in the ordinary way of instruction. But the confusion in this affair, and the learned person's embarras when he states the question, arise from not distinguishing, in these two cases, between the *active power* and the *passive gift*. In healing, the apostles are to be considered as the workers of a miracle; in speaking strange tongues, as the persons on whom a miracle is performed.

CHAP. IV.

THUS far with regard to this extraordinary descent of the Holy Ghost, as the GUIDE OF TRUTH. And

this being as well the FIRST FRUITS as the TYPE and SEAL of all *inspired knowledge*, the sacred historian thought proper to give us a circumstantial relation of so important an adventure.

The other endowments from the *Spirit of truth* he hath mentioned only occasionally. So that, had not the subject of one of St. Paul's epistles led the writer to enumerate those various gifts, as they were afterwards distributed amongst the faithful, we should have had a very imperfect knowledge of their whole extent. The church of Corinth was foolishly elated by spiritual pride; which St. Paul endeavoured to mortify and humble: and in applying his remedy, he begins with reckoning up those various graces, the credit of which they had abused, by their indulgence of this unhappy temper—*Concerning spiritual gifts* (says he) *I would not have you ignorant. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. To one is given by the Spirit, the* WORD OF WISDOM; *to another, the* WORD OF KNOWLEDGE *by the same Spirit*; *to another, the* GIFTS OF HEALING *by the same Spirit*; *to another*, WORKING OF MIRACLES; *to another*, PROPHECY; *to another*, DISCERNING OF SPIRITS *. And when he comes to apply his premisses, and to shew the inferiority of all these gifts to *charity*, he recapitulates the most distinguished of them in the following manner:—*though I have the gift of* PROPHECY, *and understand all* MYSTERIES, *and all* KNOWLEDGE; *and though I have all* FAITH *so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing* †.

In explaining the nature of these *gifts*, the two passages will afford light to one another.

The first he mentions, is the WORD OF WISDOM ‡. By which, I think, we must understand, *all the great*

* 1 Cor. xii. 1, & seq. † Ib. xiii. 2. ‡ Λόγος σοφίας.

principles

*principles of natural religion**. The ancients used the term in this sense; and we can hardly give it another, in the place before us, where we see it distinguished from the WORD OF KNOWLEDGE †, which follows, and evidently means *all the great principles of the revealed*; the term γνῶσις being as peculiarly applied by Christian writers to *revealed* Religion ‡, as σοφία is by the Pagan, to *natural:* and it is no less a generic term than the other, being mentioned in the next chapter, with one of its species,—*all* MYSTERY *and all knowledge:* for *mystery* is that part of *knowledge* which regards the interpretation of such Jewish prophecies as concern the *new dispensation.* In a word, our apostle, speaking in another place of Christ, who perfected *Revelation,* built (from its first delivery and rudiments) on *natural Religion,* uses the two terms in these assigned significations—*In whom* (says he) *are hid all the treasures of* WISDOM *and* KNOWLEDGE §.

In the recapitulation, FAITH, we see, is reckoned

* In this sense St. Paul uses the word, Col. iv. 5. Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω.

† Λόγος γνώσεως.

‡ St. Paul uses it in this sense, 2 Cor. xi. 6. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ ΓΝΩΣΕΙ. And St. Peter, 1st Ep. iii. 7. Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ ΓΝΩΣΙΝ. From this term, those early Heretics, who so much deformed the simplicity and purity of the Christian faith by visionary pretences to a superior *knowledge* of Revelation, took their name.

§ Ἐν ᾧ εἰσὶ πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς ΣΟΦΙΑΣ καὶ τῆς ΓΝΩΣΕΩΣ ἀπόκρυφοι, Coloss. ii. 3. He uses the word ἀπόκρυφοι, as having in the foregoing verse called this *wisdom and knowledge* τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ. That the word σοφία is used in the sense here contended for, is plain from his immediately subjoining a warning against vain philosophy, βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας, &c. As much as to say, I present you with the treasures of *true* wisdom—οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας—take care that nobody deceive you with the *false*.

amongst the gifts of the Spirit: and in the following chapter, where these graces are again mentioned, he explains its nature to us, in calling it a *Faith which could remove mountains*, or such a *Faith* as was attended with the power of controlling nature; alluding to that want, with which Jesus upbraids his disciples, where he says,—*had ye Faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye should say unto this mountain, Remove hence into yonder place, and it shall remove* *.

The two next gifts, of HEALING and WORKING MIRACLES, are two specieses of the foregoing genus. By *healing* is meant that salutary assistance administered to the sick, in a solemn office of the church, as directed by St. James †: and by *working miracles*, a more private and extemporaneous exercise of the same power, though less confined in its objects ‡.

PROPHECY, which follows, plainly signifies, foretelling the future fortunes of the church, to the comfort and edification (as St. Paul expresses it) of the assembly. *He that* PROPHESIETH *speaketh unto men, to edification, and exhortation, and comfort* §. And these effects, generally attending the act of *Prophecy*, in a little time assumed its name ‖. But the proper sense of *Prophecy*, and that in which it is to be understood

* Matt. xvii. 20.

† *Is any sick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of Faith* [i. e. the *faith* mentioned just before] *shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* Gen. Epist. chap. v. 14.

‡ The χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων properly expresses gifts belonging to the Church as such, and ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων implies virtue residing in the individual or particular Agent. Besides we may observe, χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων was a less degree of miraculous power than the ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, and is expressly intimated so to be, *ver.* 28.—ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, εἶτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων.

§ 1 Cor. xiv. 3. ‖ As Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xiii. 9. xiv. 1. 24.

in

in this place, is the *foretelling things to come*; which Jesus himself declares to be one essential part of the office of the Holy Spirit. *Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth—and he will* SHEW YOU THINGS TO COME *.

The last of these gifts, in the order of things, as well as in the apostle's enumeration of them, is the DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. The reputation attending the exercise of these extraordinary endowments would be a strong temptation to impostors to mimic and belie their powers; as we see it was in the case of Simon the Magician. It graciously pleased the Holy Spirit, therefore, amidst the bounty of these gifts, to bestow one, whose property it was to bring all the others to the test †, by the virtue which the possessor of it had, of distinguishing between true and false inspiration, where accidental ambiguity or designed imposture had made the matter doubtful or suspected.

These gifts, St. Paul tells us, were severally distributed amongst the Faithful. But the apostles themselves, as Scripture leads us to conclude, had them all in conjunction; exercised them in fuller measure; supported them by additional revelations ‡; and (as hath

* John xvi. 13.—καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

† διακρίσεις πνευμάτων—διάκρισις is used in other places in this signification—μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν, Rom. xiv. 1.—πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ, Heb. v. 14.—πνευμάτων, of *spirits* or divine afflations. And so the Author uses it, a little after, πνεύμασι προφητῶν, c. xiv. 32.

‡ *Now, Brethren, If I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak unto you either by* REVELATION, *or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine*, 1 Cor. xiv. 6. And this additional gift of *Revelation*, which conveyed the further knowledge of God's will in the Gospel, seems properly to have been appropriated to the Apostles, with design to dignify their office.

been proved of one of them at least) possessed them by a more lasting title.

But, for a fuller account of their *nature* and their *use*, we must have recourse to SCRIPTURE itself, which contains the history of their various fruits. And as the richest of these fruits is the INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE itself, I shall select this for the subject of what I have further to say of the primitive operations of the Holy Spirit; especially as this hath, in these *latter times*, been called in question.

CHAP. V.

WE may observe, that the Ministry of the Apostles consisted of these two parts: (1.) The temporary and occasional instructions of those Christians whom they had brought to the knowledge of, and faith in, Jesus, the Messiah: (2.) and the care of composing a WRITTEN RULE for the direction of the Church throughout all ages. Now it being granted, because, by the history of *the Acts of the Apostles*, it may be proved, that they were divinely inspired in the discharge of the temporary part; it must be very strong evidence indeed which can induce an unprejudiced man to suspect, that they were left to themselves in the execution of the other. Their preaching could only profit their contemporaries: For instructions conveyed to future ages by tradition are soon lost and forgotten; or, what is worse, polluted and corrupted with fables. It is reasonable therefore to think, that the church was provided with a WRITTEN RULE. The good providence of God hath indeed made this provision. And the Scriptures of the New Testament have been received by all the Faithful, as divine Oracles, as the inspired dictates of the Holy Spirit; till superstition extending the notion

of

of inspiration to an extravagant length, over-cautious Believers joined with Libertines, who had taken advantage of the others' folly, to deny or bring in question all inspiration whatever. For extremes beget each other; and when thus begotten, they are suffered, in order to preserve the balance of the *moral system*, as frequently to support as to destroy one another; that, while they subsist, each may defeat the mischiefs which the other threatens; and when they fall, both of them may fall together.

I shall therefore take upon me to expose the extravagance of either folly; and then endeavour to settle the TRUE NOTION OF SCRIPTURE INSPIRATION.

1. We have seen how fully gifted the apostles were for the business of their mission. They worked miracles, they spake with tongues, they explained mysteries, they interpreted prophecies, they discerned the true from the false pretences to the Spirit: And all this, for the temporary and occasional discharge of their ministry. Is it possible then, to suppose them to be deserted by their divine Inlightener when they sat down to the other part of their work; to frame a rule for the lasting service of the church? Can we believe that that Spirit, which so bountifully assisted them in their assemblies, had withdrawn himself when they retired to their private oratories: or that when their *speech* was *with all power*, their *writings* should convey no more than the weak and fallible dictates of human knowledge? To suppose the endowments of the Spirit to be so capriciously bestowed, would make it look more like a mockery than a gift. And, to believe all this would be a harder task than what (the Deist tells us) religious credulity imposes on us. No candid man therefore will be backward to conclude, that what

powers

powers the apostles had for the temporary use of their Ministry, they had, at least in as large a measure, for the perpetual service of the church.

2. St. Paul, where he recommends the study of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to Timothy, expressly declares them to be INSPIRED, in that general proposition, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**. Now if in the Mosaic dispensation, the written rule was *given by inspiration of God*, where the church was conducted in every step, at first by oracular responses, and afterwards by a long series and continued succession of Prophets; and all this under an *extraordinary* administration of Providence, such as might well seem to supersede the necessity of a scriptural inspiration; how confidently may we conclude, that the same divine Goodness would give the INFALLIBLE GUIDE of an inspired Scripture to the Christian Church, where the miraculous influence of the Holy Spirit is supposed to have ceased with the apostolic ages, and where the administration of Providence is only *ordinary*? Nor can it be said, that what St. Paul predicates of *Scripture* must be confined to the LAW (whose very name indeed implies inspiration), and what is prefatory to it: since the largeness of his terms, *all Scripture*, extends to the whole canon of the Old Testament, as then received by the two churches. And this general expression was the more expedient, as the *historic* writings did not either by their nature, like the *Prophetic*, or by their name, like the *Legal*, necessarily imply their coming immediately from God. The Canonical books of the OLD Testament, therefore, being inspired, Reason directs us to expect the same quality in the NEW. And, as in the *Old*, amongst

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

several

several occasional writings, there was the fundamental record, or the GREAT CHARTER of the Pentateuch; and in the Volumes of the Prophets, the Oracular predictions of the future fortunes of the Church to the FIRST coming of the Messiah; so, in the *New*, there is, besides the occasional Epistles, the authentic Record or GREAT CHARTER of the Gospel-Covenant; and in the Revelations of St. John, the same divine predictions continued to the SECOND coming of the Saviour of the world.

3. The reason of the thing likewise supports us in concluding for this inspiration. An universal Rule of human conduct implies as unlimited an obedience: the nature of such a Rule requiring it to be received entire; and to be observed in every article. But when once it is supposed to come to us, though from heaven, yet not immediately, but through the canal of an uninspired instrument, liable to error both in the receiving and in the dispensing of it, men would be perpetually tempted to own just as much as, and no more than, they liked to believe, or were disposed to practise; and to reject the rest as a mere human imposition. Nay the very reasons which the writers against this inspiration give us, why it is not afforded, seem to shew the necessity why it should: such as the imperfect knowledge that the Apostles had of the genius of Christianity; their disputes and differences with one another; their mistakes in matters of easy prevention, though of little consequence, &c. For if the composers of a *Rule of Faith* for the universal Church were thus naturally defective in historic and religious knowledge, What security could we have for their not misleading us in things of moment, unless prevented by the guard and guidance of the Holy Spirit,

Spirit, while they engaged themselves in this important task?

I am enough sensible of the weakness and folly of that kind of reasoning which concludes from *right* to *fact*; and assumes, that because a thing is imagined to be expedient, useful, or necessary in God's moral Government, that therefore he hath indeed made provision for it. Thus the Papal Doctors, in their arguments for the *standing power of Miracles* and the appointment of an *infallible guide*, having endeavoured to shew that the first is necessary for those *without*, and the second for those *within*, would draw us to conclude with them, that the *true church* hath, in fact, the exercise and use of MIRACLES and INFALLIBILITY.

But the cases are widely different. It is by no means agreed, that the Church, after the apostolic ages, was in the possession of so large a portion of the Holy Spirit as to enable either this pretended HEAD, or its MEMBERS, to exert the powers in question: Whereas it is confessed by all, that at the time these Scriptures were written, the composers of them were divinely inspired for the occasional work of the ministry: and the only question in dispute is, whether that Spirit which aided them in defending the Gospel before the tribunals of Kings and Magistrates *—in working miracles before the multitude of Unbelievers—and in prophesying and explaining mysteries to the assemblies of the faithful—whether this Spirit, I say, did accompany, or desert them, when they retired within themselves,

* *And when they bring you unto the Synagogues, and unto Magistrates and Powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.* Luke xii. 11, 12.

selves, to compose a RULE OF FAITH for the perpetual service of the Church?

4. But, lastly, we have the clear testimony of Scripture for this inspiration. And though the *bearing witness to itself* * might be reasonably objected in an argument addressed to Unbelievers, yet being here inforced against such of the faithful who doubt or hesitate concerning the inspiration of the New Testament, it hath all the propriety we can desire.

I venture therefore to say, that St. Paul, in the general proposition quoted above, which affirms that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God* †, necessarily includes the scriptures in question; what it predicates of *all Scripture* taking in the *new* as well as *old*; as well that which was to be written, as that which was already collected into a canon. For the term, *Scripture*, as the context leads us to understand it, is general, and means a religious rule, perfect in its direction, for the conduct of human life, in belief and practice: it being under this idea that he recommends the *Scriptures* to Timothy. The assertion therefore is universal, and amounts to this, "That *divine inspiration* is an essential quality of every *Scripture*, which constitutes the LAW or RULE of a religion coming from God."

On the whole then, we conclude, that *all the Scriptures of the New Testament were given by inspiration of God.* And thus the prophetic promise of our blessed Master, that the *Comforter should abide with us for ever*, was eminently fulfilled. For though, according to the promise, his ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful of all ages, yet his constant

* *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.* John v. 31.

† Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, &c.

abode

abode and supreme illumination is in the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament *.

* The late Mr. William Law, who obscured a good understanding by the fumes of the rankest enthusiasm, and depraved a sound judgment, still further, by the prejudices he took up against all sobriety in religion, seized the above paragraph, as he found it detached from the discourse in a quotation made of it, by an ingenious writer; and thus descants upon it: "Dr. Warburton's "doctrine is this, that the inspired books of the New Testament "is the Comforter or *Spirit of truth and Illuminator*, which is "meant by Christ's being always with the Church. Let us "therefore put the Doctor's doctrine into the letter of the text, "which will best show how true or false it is. Christ saith, *If* "*any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto* "*him, and make our abode with him.* That is, according to the "Doctor's theology, certain books of Scripture will come to him, "and make their abode with him; for he expressly confineth the "*constant abode* and *supreme illumination* of God to the holy "Scriptures. Therefore (horrible to say) God's inward presence, "his OPERATING POWER OF LIFE and light in our souls, his "dwelling in us, and we in him, is something of a lower nature, "that only may occasionally happen, and has less of God in it "than the dead letter of Scripture, which alone is the *constant* "*abode* and *supreme illumination.* Miserable fruits of a para-"doxical genius!"—*A humble, earnest, and affectionate Address to the Clergy*, p. 69, 70.

This poor man, whether misled by his fanaticism or his spleen, has here fallen into a trap which his folly laid for his malice. In the discourse, from whence the paragraph so severely handled is taken, I treated distinctly of these two branches of the Holy Spirit; 1. As he *illuminates the understanding* under the title of the *Spirit of truth.* 2. As he *rectifies the will* under the title of the *Comforter:* by the first of which, he *establishes our faith*; and by the second, he *perfects our obedience.*

Now it is under the first branch in which this obnoxious paragraph is found. So that common sense and common honesty require, that when I say, *the constant abode and supreme illumination of the Holy Spirit is in the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, I should be understood to mean, that he is there only as the *illuminator of the understanding*, the *establisher of our faith.* But Mr. Law applies my words to the other branch of his office, as the *rectifier of the Will*, the *perfecter of obedience*; and so makes my observation nonsense in order to arraign it of impiety.

CHAP. VI.

IT remains only to be considered, in what sense we are to understand this *inspiration?*

A spurious opinion, begotten in the Jewish church by superstition, and nursed up by mistaken piety in the Christian, hath almost passed into an article of faith, "That the language of Scripture was dictated by the Holy Spirit in such sort that the writers were but the passive organs through which every word and letter were conveyed." And as superstition seldom knows where to stop, the Mahometans improved upon this fancy, and represented their Scriptures as sent them down from Heaven ready written. Having got into so fair a train, the next theological question in honour of the Alcoran was, whether it was *created* or *uncreated*; and the orthodox determination, we may be sure, was in favour of the latter. But it was a rabbinical hyperbole, concerning the unvariable reading of the copies of the Law, which seems to have given the Mahometan doctors a hint for this last conceit, concerning the physical nature of the Alcoran*.

But there are many objections to that idea of organic inspiration, which mistaken piety hath adopted.

1. It would be putting the Holy Spirit on an unnecessary employment; for much of these sacred volumes

* Orobio, speaking the language of the Rabbins, says,—Liber Mosis est ita perfectus et purus, atque ab erroribus alienus, ab ejus conditore per tot secula variis in nationibus servatus, ut *cætera naturalia* quæ Deus non corruptioni exposita *creavit*; ut Cœli, Sol et Astra, quæ a sua formatione non majore Providentia incorrupta, servantur et subsistunt, quam divini legis libri, qui nunquam aliquam mutationem experti fuerunt. Apud Limb. p. 147.

being historical, and of facts and discourses which had fallen under the observation of the writers, they did not need his immediate assistance to do this part of their business for them.

2. Had the Scriptures been written under this organic inspiration, there must have been the most perfect agreement amongst the four Evangelists, in every circumstance of the smallest fact. But we see there is not this perfect agreement. In some minute particulars, which regard neither faith nor manners, neither the truth nor certainty of the History in general, the several writers vary from one another. A variation, which, though it discredits the notion of an organic inspiration, yet (which is of much more importance) supports the fidelity of the historians; as it shews that they did not write in concert, or copy from one another; but that each described the proper impressions which the same facts had made upon himself.

3. Were this the true idea of Scripture-inspiration, that each writer was but the mere organ of the Spirit, the phraseology or turn of expression had been one and the same throughout all the sacred books written in the same language: whereas we find it to be very different and various; always corresponding to the conditions, tempers, and capacities of the writers.

4. Lastly, the very words of Scripture must, in this case, have been preserved, throughout all ages, perfectly pure and free from the corruptions and mistakes of transcribers. For if it were expedient, useful, and sorting with the views of divine wisdom, that every word and letter should be inspired, it was equally expedient that every word and letter should be preserved uncorrupt; otherwise the Holy Spirit would appear to have laboured in vain. Now general ex-

perience assures us, that this is not the case; frequent transcribing hath occasioned numerous variations in words and phrases, throughout all the Scriptures of the New Testament. But though this opposes the notion of organic inspiration, yet the harmless nature of the variations, which never disturb the sense, nor obscure a single proposition of Faith, or precept of good manners, affords us a noble instance of the gracious providence of God, in bringing down to us those Scriptures, destined for an *infallible rule*, incorrupt and entire, in all essential and even material points; though, after escaping the impure hands of so many outrageous bigots, schismatic visionaries, and heretical seducers, they had a long journey still to run, through the dark cloisters of dreaming superstition, and of ignorance but half awake.

From all this we conclude, that the notion of organic inspiration must needs be false: and yet we have proved it to be an undoubted truth, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were *given by the inspiration of God.*

CHAP. VII.

LET us consider, then, in what sense this inspiration is to be understood.—From the premises we can deduce no other notion of it but this, "That the Holy Spirit so directed the pens of these writers, that no considerable error should fall from them:—by enlightening them with his immediate influence in all such matters as were necessary for the instruction of the Church, and which, either through ignorance or prejudice, they would otherwise have represented imperfectly, partially, or falsely; and by preserving them by the more ordinary means of providence, from any mistakes of

consequence, concerning those things whereof they had acquired a competent knowledge by the common way of information. In a word, by watching over them incessantly; but with so suspended a hand, as permitted the use, and left them to the guidance, of their own faculties, while they kept clear of error; and then only interposing when, without this divine assistance, they would have been in danger of falling."

This seems to be the true idea of the inspiration in question. This only doth agree with all appearances; and will fully answer the purpose of an inspired writing, which is to afford an INFALLIBLE RULE for the direction of the Catholic Church.

But it is not only the nature and genius, the state and condition of Holy Scripture, which support this idea of inspiration: the express words of its composers lead to the same conclusion. St. Peter, speaking of the Epistles of his fellow-labourer St. Paul, uses this temperate expression concerning their inspiration; he hath written to you, says he, *according to the wisdom given unto him* *: Now, as on the one hand, by the character of this *wisdom*, which is said to be GIVEN, we must conclude it to be *that wisdom coming immediately from above*; so, from this account of the Apostle's free use of it, who employed it as the regulator of his thoughts and conceptions, we must conclude on the other, that there was no inspiration ruling irresistibly, further than to secure the writer from error and mistake. And the diffidence with which the Apostle himself speaks, on a certain occasion †, concerning his inspiration, shews that it could not be organic, for this species excludes all doubt and uncertainty concerning its presence.

* ΚΑΤΑ τὴν αὐτῷ ΔΟΘΕΙΣΑΝ σοφίαν——2 Pet. iii. 15.

† δοκῶ δὲ κἀγὼ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἔχειν. 1 Cor. vii. 40.

But

But it may be said, that, on this moderated idea of inspiration, we shall never be able to distinguish which parts were written under the immediate influence of the Spirit, and which were the product of human knowledge only. What if we shall not? Where is the mischief or inconvenience? While all we want to know is, that every sentence of Scripture, which but remotely concerns either faith or practice, is infallibly true. It is of little consequence to us to be instructed how or in what manner that truth came to be secured: whether by direct inspiration: or by that virtual superintendence of the Spirit, which preserved the writers of it from error. Scripture is the rule of Christian conduct; and if the rule be known to be unerring, this is all that is wanting to effectuate its end.

And yet I am persuaded, licentious men have been the forwarder to contend for this moderated inspiration, under the idea of a *partial* one, on the pleasing fancy that it would support them in believing no more than suited with their principles or their practice. But, what hath been observed on this head sufficiently exposes the vanity of all such idle contrivances to let men loose from any part of their faith or duty. For, be it admitted that this or that particular doctrine or precept was not delivered under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, but was conveyed to posterity, in the common way of history, as the writer received it from his Master, yet this takes nothing at all from that certainty of truth which attends directer inspiration; since the rational idea of a *partial* influence implies, that the Spirit so watched over the authors of the New Testament, and so guided their pens, as to admit no mixture of material error in those parts where they discharged no more than the function of ordinary historians.

In a word, it imports us little to be solicitous about the Scriptural DELIVERY of Gospel truths; whether they be conveyed to us by means merely human, or by the more powerful workings of the Holy Spirit, so long as we are assured that Divine Providence guarded that delivery from all approach of error. But then let us observe, that this is a very different thing from the ORIGINE of the truths themselves: for on this latter, the reality of our religion, indeed, depends; the very nature of it consisting in this, that the doctrines which it teacheth be not only truths SIMPLY, but truths REVEALED from Heaven. And indeed, even with regard to the *delivery*, when the writers propose any thing of *faith* or *practice*, explanatory of what their Master taught, and not explicitly contained in his words, we must needs conclude, that so far forth they were under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, who was *to teach them all things:* and this influence the Apostle calls, *speaking by revelation* *.

Thus we see the advantages resulting from a PARTIAL INSPIRATION, as here contended for and explained. It answers all the ends of a Scripture universally and organically inspired, by producing an UNERRING RULE of Faith and Manners; and, besides, *obviates* all those objections to *inspiration* which arise from the too high notion of it: such as trifling errors in circumstances of small importance; for the least error is inconsistent with organic inspiration, but may well stand with a virtual and co-operating influence: such again, as the various readings in the several transcripts; and the various styles amongst the several authors of Scripture: inconsistencies which would never have been permitted, and contrarieties which could never have happened, under universal inspiration; but which

* ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἐν ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΕΙ. 1. Cor. xiv. 6.

are

are the natural and harmless consequences of the PARTIAL.

In a word, by admitting no more than this lower kind of inspiration, so warmly contended for (and in terms as vague and indeterminate as the Scepticism of the users) by men who were in hopes that the admission of it would end in no inspiration at all, we secure and establish the infallible word of Scripture; and free it from all those embarrassing circumstances which have been so artfully and disingenuously thrown out to its discredit.

CHAP. VIII.

BUT there is no idea of an inspired Scripture, which libertine men have not perverted to serve their evil purposes. Thus, when their own idea of a *partial inspiration* hath failed in this service, they have tried what mischief that other, of our invention, an *organic inspiration*, was likely to produce. In order to this, they have laid it down as a proposition not likely to be contested, "that, on this idea, the work inspired could be no other than a perfect model of eloquence, *pure, clear, noble, and affecting beyond the force of common speech.*" To this, it was thought enough to shew, that their principle was false; that, in the composition of sacred Scripture, there was *no organic inspiration:* and this, I presume, I have sufficiently performed.

But, luckily for their purpose, there is another circumstance in the dispensation of Grace, which restores their objection, concerning *a perfect model of eloquence*, to its native force. This circumstance therefore is now to be considered; the use made of it, fairly repre-

sented; and the proper reasoning applied, to enervate its new recovered force. "

The circumstance is this: Several books of the New Testament are written by persons who acquired the knowledge of the Greek tongue by miraculous infusion, as at the day of Pentecost. "Now the Holy Ghost, say they, could not but inspire the purest Greek, and the most perfect eloquence in the use of it; whatever they wrote therefore in any future time, in this language, must needs bear these marks of its celestial birth, whether they were assisted in the composition by the Holy Spirit, or whether they wrote upon the fund of their formerly acquired knowledge. But the language of all the books of the New Testament is utterly rude and barbarous, and savours nothing of so high an original."

The learned person (whose reasoning against the duration of the inspired knowledge of language on the day of Pentecost, hath been considered above) lends the Libertine these arms, in his concluding argument, in support of that notion; which argument I have reserved to be considered in this place.

"If we allow (says he) the gift to be lasting, we "must conclude that some at least of the books of "Scripture were in this inspired Greek. But (says he) "we should naturally expect to find an inspired lan- "guage to be such as is worthy of God; that is, pure, "clear, noble, and affecting, even beyond the force of "common speech; since nothing can come from God "but what is perfect in its kind. In short, the purity "of Plato, and the eloquence of Cicero. Now (con- "tinues he) if we try the apostolic language by this "rule, we shall be so far from ascribing it to God, "that we shall scarce think it worthy of Man, that is, "of the liberal and polite; it being utterly rude and

"barbarous

"barbarous, and abounding with every fault that can "possibly deform a language. And though some "writers, prompted by a false zeal, have attempted "to defend the purity of the Scripture-Greek, their "labour has been idly employed*."

These triumphant observations are founded on two propositions, both of which he takes for granted; and yet neither of them is true.

1. The one, That an inspired language must needs be a language of perfect eloquence.—2. The other, That eloquence is something congenial and essential to human speech.—I shall shew the falsehood of both.

With regard to the first proposition, I will be bold to affirm, that were the STYLE of the New Testament exactly such as his very exaggerated account of it would persuade us to believe, namely, that it *is utterly rude and barbarous, and abounding with every fault that can possibly deform a language*, this is so far from proving such language not divinely inspired, that it is one certain mark of this original.

I will not pretend to point out which books of the New Testament were or were not composed by those who had the Greek tongue thus miraculously infused into them; but this I will venture to say, that the style of a writer so inspired, who had not (as these writers had not) afterwards cultivated his knowledge of the language on the principles of Grecian eloquence, would be precisely such as we find it in the books of the New Testament.

For, if this only be allowed, which no one, I think, will contest with me, that a strange language acquired by illiterate men, in the ordinary way, would be full of the idioms of their native tongue, just as the Scrip-

* Dr. Middleton's *Essay on the Gift of Tongues*, Works, vol ii. p. 91.

ture-

ture-Greek is observed to be full of Syriasms and Hebraisms; how can it be pretended, by those who reflect upon the nature of language, that a strange tongue divinely infused into illiterate men, like that at the day of Pentecost, could have any other properties or conditions?

Let us weigh these cases impartially. Every language consists of two distinct parts; the single terms, and the phrases and idioms. The first, as far as concerns appellatives especially, is of mere arbitrary imposition, though on artificial principles common to all men: The second arises insensibly, but constantly, from the manners, customs, and tempers of those to whom the language is vernacular; and so becomes, though much less arbitrary (as what the Grammarians call *congruity* is more concerned in this part than in the other), yet various and different as the several tribes and nations of mankind. The first therefore is unrelated to every thing but to the genius of language in general: the second hath an intimate connexion with the fashions, notions, and opinions of that people only, to whom the language is native.

Let us consider then the constant way which illiterate men take to acquire the knowledge of a foreign tongue. Do they not make it their principal, and, at first, their only study, to treasure up in their memory the signification of the terms? Hence, when they come to talk or write in the speech thus acquired, their language is found to be full of their own native idioms. And thus it will continue, till, by long use of the strange tongue, and especially by long acquaintance with the owners of it, they have imbibed the particular genius of the language.

Suppose then this foreign tongue, instead of being thus gradually introduced into the minds of these illite-

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rate men, was instantaneously infused into them; the operation (though not the very mode of operating) being the same, must not the effect be the same, let the cause be never so different? Without question. The divine impression must be made either by fixing the terms or single words only and their signification in the memory; as, for instance, Greek terms corresponding to the Syriac or Hebrew; or else, together with that simple impression, another must be made, to inrich the mind with all the ideas which go towards the composing the phrases and idioms of the language so inspired: But this latter impression seems to require, or rather indeed implies, a previous one, of the tempers, fashions, and opinions of the people to whom the language is native, upon the minds of those to whom the language is thus imparted; because the phrase and idiom arises from and is dependent on the manners arising from thence: and therefore the force of expression can be understood only in proportion to the knowledge of those manners: and understood they were to be: the Recipients of this spiritual gift being not organical Canals, but rational Dispensers. So that this would be a waste of miracles without a sufficient cause; the Syriac or Hebrew idiom, to which the Disciples were enabled of themselves to adapt the words of the Greek or any other language, abundantly serving every useful purpose, all which centered in the communicating of CLEAR INFORMATION. We conclude, therefore, that what was thus inspired was the TERMS, together with that grammatic congruity in the use of them, which is dependent thereon. In a word, to suppose such kind of inspired knowledge of *strange tongues* as includes all the native peculiarities, which, if you will, you may call their *elegancies* (for the more a language is coloured by the character and manners of

of the native users, the more elegant it is esteemed); to suppose this, is, as I have said, an ignorant fancy, and repugnant to reason and experience.

Now, from what hath been observed, it follows, that if the style of the New Testament were indeed derived from a language divinely infused as on the day of Pentecost, it must be just such, with regard to its style, which, in fact, we find it to be; that is to say, Greek terms very frequently delivered in Syriac and Hebrew idiom.

The conclusion from the whole is this, that a *nominal* or *local* barbarity of style (for that this attribute, when applied to style, is no more than nominal or local, will be clearly shewn under our next head) is so far from being an objection to its miraculous acquisition, that it is one mark of such extraordinary original.

But the learned writer is so perfectly satisfied that this *barbarity* of style, which claims the title of inspired, is a sure mark of imposture, that he almost ventures to foretel, it will prove the destruction of those pretensions, as it did to the *Delphic Oracles*. The parallel, he thinks, is a *curiosity*; and so do I; therefore the reader shall have it just as he himself has dressed it up. "It is somewhat *curious* to observe, that there was a "controversy of the same kind amongst the Ancient "Heathens, concerning the style and composition of "the *Delphic Oracles*. For as those Oracles were "delivered in verse, and the verses generally rude and "harsh, and offending frequently both in the exactness "of metre and propriety of language, so men of sense "easily saw that *they could not be inspired by the* "*Deity:* others, on the contrary, blinded by their "prejudices, or urged by their zeal, to support the "credit of the popular superstition, constantly main-"tained, that the verses were really beautiful and "noble

" noble, and worthy of God; and that the contrary " opinion flowed from a false delicacy and sickly taste, " which relished no poetry, but what was soft and " sweet; and breathing nothing, as it were, but spices " and perfumes. The dispute however seems to have " been compounded, and a distinction found, in which " all parties acquiesced, by allowing *some sort of inspi-* " *ration, and divine authority to the matter of the* " *Oracle*, but leaving all the rest *to the proper talents* " *and faculties of the Prophetess:* who being tired at " last with the continual labour of versifying, began to " utter her Oracles in prose, till the whole imposture " fell by degrees into an universal contempt, and so " finally expired *." "

A sad story! But, happily, the essential differences between these *oracular* pretensions, and those of the Christian Evangelists (all of which the learned Writer has thought proper to overlook), will ease us of our fears; for any one of these differences is sufficient to shew, that though the objection may hold good against the Heathen Oracles, yet it has not the least force against Scripture inspiration.

1. First then the *Delphic Oracles* were supposed to proceed from the fabled *God of verse*, who having, according to the popular opinion, inspired his *Poets* as well as *Prophets*, there was, in the writings of the most authentic of the *former*, a model of divine eloquence, on which the pretensions of the *latter* might be estimated. But Scripture inspiration came professedly from a Deity who had declared that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways his ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth*, &c. †

* *Essay on the Gift of Tongues*, vol. ii. of Middleton's Works, pp. 91, 92. † Isaiah lv. 8, 9.

2. The

2. The Delphic Oracles were delivered in *verse* or *measure*; for the composition of which, there were established rules, formed on the writings of the ancient Poets: when therefore this species of eloquence was employed by the Delphic Prophetess, if she conformed not to the established rules, but *offended against the metre*, which her own God originally inspired, she might be fairly adjudged an impostor. But the inspired Penman disclaimed all models of human eloquence, and *the enticing words of man's wisdom.*

3. The Delphic Prophetess was a *mere organ*, her Prophecies being delivered in a fit of ecstacy, when the *presence* of the God was supposed to obliterate all the impressions of human ideas; so that every iota was to be placed to the account of the inspiring God. But it was just otherwise with such as were actuated by the Holy Spirit: These, in the very moments of inspiration, still retained the free use of themselves, and continued masters of their rational and persuasive faculties; *the Spirits of the Prophets* (as St. Paul informs us, who spoke from his own experience) *were subject to the Prophets*!* The Pagan Zealots therefore grossly prevaricated, when, to cover the imposture of the *Delphic Oracle*, they compromised the matter with their adversaries, *by allowing some sort of inspiration, and divine authority, but leaving all the rest to the proper talents and faculties of the Prophetess.* But the Defenders of our holy Religion, when they say the same thing in defence of sacred Scripture, do neither prevaricate nor compromise; they advance, and they adhere to, a reasonable and consistent hypothesis; which, in an examination of the present state of the books of the New Testament as transmitted

* 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

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down to us from the earliest antiquity, I have shewn to be actually supported by fact.

On the whole, then, we need not be too much alarmed at the hint which the learned Writer hath here given us, in the fate of the *Delphic Oracles*, though never so tragically related:—*The Prophetess, tired at last with the continual labour of versifying, began to utter her oracles in* PROSE, *till the whole imposture fell by degrees into an universal contempt, and so finally expired*; I say we need not be much alarmed at this catastrophe, because our Oracles hold nothing in common with the *Delphic*; and because the disgrace brought upon these was derived neither from their *bad verse* nor *barbarous prose*; but from very different causes; which the learned Person either did not know, or at least did not care that his Reader should.

In a word, there is but one single mark of resemblance in all this ostentatious parallel; and that does not lie between the Pagan and Christian Oracles, but between their Defenders; who, with equal indiscretion, contended for purity, elegance, and beauty of style, where in one case it was not to be found, though pretended to; and in the other, neither pretended to, nor found. The defenders of the *Delphic Oracles*, the learned Person thus describes, *that, blinded by their prejudices, or urged by their zeal to support the credit of the popular superstition, they constantly maintained, that the verses were really beautiful and noble, and worthy of God; and that the contrary opinion flowed from a false delicacy, and sickly taste, which relished no poetry, but what was soft and sweet, and breathing nothing but spices and perfumes.*—The Defenders of Scripture eloquence he had before represented in the same light—*And though*

though some Writers, prompted by a false Zeal, have attempted to defend the purity of Scripture-Greek, their labours have been idly employed.

Nothing, indeed, is more certain. Their labours have been very idly employed. One common delusion has misled the zealous defenders of all religions on this head, not only the *Pagan* and the *Christian*, but, as we have seen, the *Mahometan* likewise. And here let me observe, what is well worth our notice, that that common imbecility of our nature, which leads the professors of all Religions into the same specific absurdities of the *marvellous*, though without imitating one another, has (when blundering on, in the obscure of Superstition, or the blind blaze of Fanaticism) generally been more successful in the support of false Religion than of the true. Of this I have occasionally given divers instances elsewhere. One of them, which I just now chanced to mention, will deserve to be explained. The Mahometan Doctors were (with their Master) under this common delusion, that an inspired writing must needs be a perfect model of eloquence. And they succeeded better than the Christian; for they had advantages which our zealots had not. For, first, Mahomet himself delivered the Alcoran to his followers under this character; and defied the masters of human eloquence to equal it; whereas the writers of Holy Scripture disclaim all these fantastic advantages. Secondly, when Mahomet retailed his Alcoran, there was no acknowledged model of Arabic eloquence; but when the books of the New Testament were composed, there were many, and of the highest authority; so that those bold pretensions easily obtained, and soon smoothed the way for its actually becoming such a model. Lastly, Enthusiasm, which had just done much greater things,

things, easily induced the Saracens to believe, that they saw what their Prophet so confidently objected to their admiration, an all-perfect model of eloquence in the Chapters of the Alcoran. And they believed so long till the book became in fact, what at first they had only fancied it, as real and substantial a pattern of eloquence as any whatsoever; a paradox, which, like many others that I have had the odd fortune to advance, will presently be seen to be only another name for Truth. But here in the North-west, our enthusiasm is neither so exalted, nor our habits so constant. We have neither the knack of persuading ourselves so readily, nor the humour of sticking to a fashion so obstinately.

However foolish then our *false Zealots have shewn themselves in attempting to defend the purity of the Scripture Greek*, it little became the learned Writer of all men, to make them the subject of his derision; since the *same false principle*, which betrayed them into one extreme, hath misled him into another. The principle I mean (and it has misled many besides) is that which lays it down for truth, *That an inspired Scripture must be a model of perfect eloquence.*

CHAP. IX.

THIS brings us to the learned Writer's *second* proposition, which I promised to examine; and on which the principle, here delivered, is founded. It is this,

2. That eloquence is something congenial and essential to human speech; and inherent in the constitution of things.

This supposes, that there is some certain ARCHETYPE

in nature, to which that quality refers, and on which it is to be formed and modelled. And, indeed, admitting this to be the case, one should be apt enough to conclude, that when the Author of Nature condescended to inspire one of these plastic performances of human art, he would make it by the exactest pattern of the *Archetype*.

But the proposition is fanciful and false. Eloquence is not congenial or essential to human speech, nor is there any Archetype in nature to which that quality refers. It is accidental and arbitrary, and depends on custom and fashion: It is a mode of human communication which changes with the changing climates of the earth; and is as various and unstable as the genius, temper, and manners of its diversified inhabitants. For what is PURITY but the use of such terms, with their multiplied combinations, as the interest, the complexion, or the caprice of a Writer or Speaker of Authority hath preferred to its equals? What is ELEGANCE, but such a turn of idiom as a fashionable fancy hath brought into repute? And what is SUBLIMITY, but the application of such images, as arbitrary or casual connexions, rather than their own native grandeur, have dignified and ennobled? Now ELOQUENCE is a compound of these three qualities of Speech, and consequently must be as nominal and unsubstantial as its constituent parts. So that that mode of composition, which is a model of *perfect eloquence* to one nation or people, must appear extravagant or mean to another. And thus in fact it was. Indian and Asiatic Eloquence were esteemed hyperbolic, unnatural, abrupt, and puerile, to the more phlegmatic inhabitants of Rome and Athens. And the Western Eloquence, in its turn, appeared nerveless and effeminate, frigid or insipid, to the hardy and

inflamed

inflamed imaginations of the East. Nay, what is more, each species, even of the most approved genus, changed its nature with the change of clime and language; and the same expression, which, in one place, had the utmost *simplicity*, had, in another, the utmost *sublime*.

Longinus reading these words in the Septuagint, *God said, Let there be light, and there was light*, and regulating his ideas on the genius of his own language, very acutely gave them as an example of the *sublime*. We may be sure the judgment of so accomplished a Critic would be eagerly laid hold on by our Doctor's *zealous Divines*, to exalt the credit of Moses's elocution. Indeed, the sublime introduction to the book of Genesis passed, for a long time, unquestioned. At length Huetius and Le Clerc, more carefully attending to the original text, discovered that the words were so far from being *sublime*, that they were of the utmost *simplicity*; and each of these Critics composed a long dissertation to support his opinion. So far was well; but, not content with what they had done, they would needs prove that Longinus was mistaken in his criticism of the Greek. This provoked the Poet Boileau, who had just translated that celebrated work, to support his Author's judgment; and (as he was in the same delusion with his adversaries) he did it by endeavouring to prove the sublime of the original expression. This furnished matter for answers and replies in abundance: Whereas, had the disputants but reflected, that the same expression, which in one language was highly *sublime*, might, in another, be extremely *simple*, the judgment of the Greek critic would have been confessed by Huetius and Le Clerc, and the biblical knowledge of these two learned Interpreters allowed of by Boileau. As the reason of

all this serves to illustrate what is here advanced concerning *the nature of eloquence*, I shall endeavour to explain it. The ideas arising from the knowledge of the true God, and his attributes, were familiar to Moses; and whenever ideas are familiar, they raise no emotion; consequently, the expression of such ideas will naturally be cold and simple. There is the utmost simplicity in the words—*God said, Let there be light, and there was light:* and nothing but their simplicity would be seen or felt by a Jewish Reader, to whom the same religious ideas were equally familiar. But let a Greek, brought up and educated in the grovelling and puerile notions which his national Theology produced and supported, let such a one, I say, raise himself with pain, by the strong effort of a superior genius,

"To the first Good, first Perfect, and first Fair,"

the new ideas, with which his mind is warmed and enlarged by the knowledge of the true God and his Attributes, naturally produce admiration; and admiration in a Genius, is the parent of *sublime* expression. So that when the subject is Creation, his point will be to convey the highest idea of Omnipotence: but the effect of divine power, immediately following its volition, gives that highest idea: therefore, in the midst of his sublime conceptions, he will hardly think of any other words to convey them than—*God said, Let there be light, and there was light.* And every Greek Reader, to whom the ideas of true Theology were as novel and unfamiliar as they were to the Writer, would naturally esteem that expression, which so graphically describes the instantaneous production of Omnipotence, to be infinitely SUBLIME.

Apply all this to the Books of the NEW TESTA-

MENT, an authorized collection, professedly designed for the rule and direction of mankind. Now such a rule demanded that it should be inspired of God. But inspired writing, the Objectors say, implies the most *perfect eloquence*. What human model then was the Holy Ghost to follow? And a human model, of arbitrary construction, it must needs be, because there was no other: Or if there were another, it would never suit the purpose, which was to make an impression on the minds and affections; and this impression, such an eloquence only as that which had gained the popular ear could effect. Should therefore the *eastern* eloquence be employed? But this would be too inflated and gigantic for the *West*. Should it be the *western?* But this would be too cold and torpid for the *East*. Or suppose the *generic* eloquence of the more polished Nations was to be preferred, Which *species* of it was to be employed? The rich exuberance of the Asiatic Greeks, or the dry conciseness of the Spartans? The pure and poignant ease and flowing sweetness of the Attic modulation, or the strength and grave severity of the Roman tone? Or should all give way to that African torrent, which arose from the fermented mixture of the dregs of Greece and Italy, and soon after overflowed the Church with theological conceits in a sparkling luxuriancy of thought, and a sombrous rankness of expression? Thus various were the specieses! all as much decried by a different Genus, and each as much disliked by a different Species, as the eloquence of the remotest East and West, by one another.

But it will be said, Are there not some more substantial principles of eloquence, common to all?—Without doubt, there are.—Why then should not these have been employed, to do credit to the Apos-

tolic inspiration? For good reasons: respecting both the Speaker and the Hearers. For what *is* eloquence but a persuasive turn given to the elocution, to supply that inward, that conscious persuasion of the Speaker, so necessary to gain a fair hearing? But the first Preachers of the Gospel did not need a succedaneum to that inward conscious persuasion! And what is the *end* of eloquence, even when it extends no further than to those more general principles, but to stifle reason, and inflame the passions? But the propagation of Christian Truths indispensably requires the aid of Reason, and requires no other human aid. And Reason can never be fairly and vigorously exerted but in that favourable interval which precedes the appeal to the passions. These were the causes which forced the Masters of Eloquence to confess, that the utmost perfection of their art consists in keeping it concealed; for that the ostentation of it seemed to indicate the absence of Truth—*Ubicunque ars ostendatur*, says the most candid and able of them all, *veritas abesse videatur**. Hence so many various precepts to make their most artificial periods appear artless. Now surely that was a very suspicious instrument for Heaven-directed Men, which, to preserve its credit, must pretend absence, and labour to keep out of sight.

What, therefore, do our ideas of fit and right tell us is required in the *style* of an universal Law? Certainly no more than this—To employ those aids which are common to *all* Language as such; and to reject what is peculiar to *each*, as they are casually circumstanced. And what are these aids but CLEARNESS and PRECISION? By these, the mind and sentiments of the Composer are intelligibly conveyed to the Reader. These qualities are essential to language,

* Quint. l. ix. c. 3.

as

as it is distinguished from jargon: they are eternally the same, and independent on custom or fashion. To give a language *clearness*, was the office of Philosophy; to give it *precision*, was the office of Grammar. Definition performs the first service by a resolution of the ideas which make up the terms; Syntaxis performs the second by a combination of the several parts of speech into a systematic congruity: these are the very things in language which are least positive, as being conducted on the principles of Metaphysics and Logic. Whereas, all besides, from the very power of the elements, and signification of the terms, to the tropes and figures of Composition, are arbitrary; and, what is more, as these are a deviation from those principles of Metaphysics and Logic, they are frequently vicious. This, the great Master, quoted above, freely confesseth, where speaking of that ornamented speech, which he calls σχήματα λέξεως, he makes the following confession and apology— "esset enim omne Schema VITIUM, si non peteretur, "sed accideret. Verum auctoritate, vetustate, consuetudine, plerumque defenditur, sæpe etiam RATIONE QUADAM. Ideoque cum sit a simplici "rectoque loquendi genere deflexa, *virtus* est, si "habet PROBABILE ALIQUID quod sequatur *."

Now these qualities of *clearness* and *precision*, so necessary to the communication of our ideas, eminently distinguish the writers of the New Testament; insomuch that it might be easily shewn, that whatever difficulties occur in the sacred volumes, they do not arise from any imperfection in the mode of conveying their ideas, occasioned by this local or nominal *barbarity of style*; but either from the sublime or obscure nature of the things conveyed to the reader by words;

* Quint. l. ix. c. 3.

or from the purposed conciseness of the writer; who, in the occasional mention of any matter unrelated, or not essential, to the dispensation, always affects a studied brevity.

But further; suppose that, in some cases, an authentic Scripture, designed for a religious rule, demanded this quality of local eloquence (for that, in general, it is not required, I have fully shewn above); let this, I say, be supposed, yet still it would not affect the case in hand, since it would be altogether unsuitable to the peculiar genius of the GOSPEL. It might easily be known to have been the purpose of Providence (though such purpose had not been expressly declared), that the Gospel should bear all the substantial marks of its divine Original; as well in the circumstances of its promulgation, as in the course of its progress. To this end, the appointed Ministers of its conveyance were persons, mean and illiterate, and chosen from amongst the lowest of the people; that when Sceptics and Unbelievers saw the world converted by the *foolishness of preaching*, as the learned Apostle, in great humility, thinks fit to call it, they might have no pretence to ascribe the success, to the parts, the station, or the authority of the Preachers. Now had the language, infused into these illiterate men, been the sublime of Plato, or the eloquence of Tully, Providence would have appeared to counteract its own measures, and defeat the purpose best calculated to advance its glory. But *God is wise, though man's a fool.* And the course of his Wisdom was here, as every where else, uniform and constant. It not only chose the weakest Ministers of his Will, but kept out of their hands that powerful weapon of *contorted* words, which their adversaries might so easily have wrested to the dishonour of the Gospel.' So much was Dr. Middleton mistaken, when besides

besides *clearness* (which he might be allowed to expect) he supposes *purity*, *nobleness*, and pathetic *affection*, to be qualities inseparable from an inspired writing. St. Paul, who, amongst these simple instruments, was, for the same wise purposes, made an exception to the general choice, yet industriously prosecuted that sublime view, for the sake of which the choice was made; by rejecting all other weapons but those of the Spirit, to spread abroad the Conquests of the Son of God. *My speech* (says he) *and my preaching was not with inticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.* As much as to say, "My success was not owing to the sophistical eloquence of Rhetoricians, but to the supernatural powers, with which I was endowed, of interpreting Prophecies and working Miracles." He subjoins the reason of his use of these means—*that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*; i. e. Be converted not by force of Philosophy and Eloquence, but of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit: *Therefore* (saith he again) *God hath chosen the foolish things of the World to confound the wise*; *and the weak things of the World to confound the mighty* *. And lest it should be said, that this was an affectation of despising advantages which they themselves could not reach, it pleased Providence that this declaration should be made, not by one of the more sordid and idiotic of the number: but by Him, to whom both nature and discipline had given powers to equal even the heights of Greek and Roman elocution. For we see, by what now and then accidentally flames out in the fervor of his reasoning, that he had a strong and clear discernment, a quick and lively imagination, and an extensive and intimate acquaintance with those

* 1 Cor. ii. 4.

Masters

Masters in moral painting, the Greek Sophists and Philosophers: all which he proudly sacrificed to the glory of the *everlasting Gospel.* Nor does he appear to have been conscious of any inconsistency between an *inspired language* and its *local barbarity of style:* for, having had occasion, in this very Epistle, to remind the Corinthians of the abundance of spiritual grace bestowed upon him, he says, *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all* *; and yet he tells them that he is *rude in speech* †. Which apparent inconsistency the reader may accept, if he pleases, for a further proof of the truth of what has been above delivered, concerning the natural condition of an inspired language.

Thus we see, how unsuitable this quality of *local* eloquence would be to the peculiar genius of the Gospel. Yet as there is, in the Old Testament, much of this ornament of style, and more imagined, it may not be improper to explain the reason of this diversity, and shew how consistent the use of it is, in those places, with the principles already laid down.

1. First, then, we may observe that Judaism was not an *universal* religion, but instituted for the use of a single people; so that none of the inconveniencies mentioned above of a *local eloquence* could arise from the use of it in that religion.

2. The Jewish religion had a *public part* ‡; and consequently abounded in such Rites and Ceremonies, to which an ornamented style was well adapted.

3. The subjects of several of the Books of the Old Testament are in their nature *poetical,* several *rhetorical,* and so seem to have demanded a Style suitable to their genius.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 18. † 2 Cor. xi. 6.

‡ See Div. Leg. Book v.

CHAP. X.

AND now enough hath been said to make a just estimate of the value of those objections which two celebrated writers * have inforced, with all their art and address, against the inspiration of the New Testament, from its local barbarity of style. Dr. Middleton's objection hath been considered already. I shall chuse to close this first part of my discourse with an examination of that still more ingenious objection of the noble Author of the CHARACTERISTICS; who hath employed all the powers of his wit and eloquence to expose the want of these qualities in the sacred Volumes.

—— "It is NO OTHERWISE (says his Lordship) "in the grammatical art of Characters and PAINTED "SPEECH, than in the art of painting itself. I have "seen, in certain Christian Churches, an ancient piece "or two, affirmed, on the solemn faith of priestly "tradition, to have been *angelically* and divinely "wrought by a supernatural hand and sacred pencil. "Had the piece happened to be of a hand like "Raphael's, I could have found nothing certain to "oppose to the tradition. But having observed the "whole STYLE and manner of the pretended heavenly "workmanship, to be so indifferent as to vary, in "many particulars, from the *truth of art*, I pre-"sumed, within myself, to beg pardon of the tradition, "and assert, *confidently*, that *if the pencil had been "heaven-guided it could never have been so lame in "it's performance:* it being a mere contradiction to "all divine and moral truth, that a *celestial hand*, sub-

* Dr. Middleton and Lord Shaftesbury.

"mitting

"mitting itself to the rudiments of a human art, "should sin against the art itself, and express false- "hood and error instead of justness and proportion *."

This tale of *St. Luke's painting*, like the story of the DELPHIC ORACLES, needs no application. Every one sees that it is given to discredit the inspiration of holy Scripture. But as *confidently* as his Lordship says, he draws his conclusions from it, he gives them no other support than this mistaken conceit, which he erects into an axiom: *That it is no otherwise in the grammatical art of characters and painted speech, than in the art of painting itself:* or, in other words, that the *painted speech of Characters* which represent ideas, and the *painted images of things*, are performances of the same kind. Now, in examining their natures by the principles of human speech, before laid down and explained, it appears that they are of very different kinds, having nothing in common but the office of giving information, *truly* and *clearly*; one of them by representing the images of corporeal things; the other by representing the incorporeal ideas of the speaker's or writer's mind. And what thing is there, in art or nature, which does not hold something in common with another? But the difference between *these* is indeed no less than between things NATURAL and things POSITIVE, between constitutional and arbitrary; *painting* being IMITATION, and WORDS only SYMBOLS. The subject of the *first*, constant, unvariable, necessary; as having its archetype in nature: the other unstable, shifting, and capricious, as depending for its existence on the human will, under the direction of fancy and caprice. In PAINTING there is, properly speaking, but *one true style*, and that is an exact imitation of nature. In SPEECH there are as many

* Charact. viii. p. 230.

true

true styles as there are tempers and humours, customs and fashions, amongst men. Eloquence, *or truth of style*, in speaking or writing, being nothing else but the adapting the terms of human speech to the various conceptions, fancies, and affections of the hearers; so that, as in *painting* there is but one true style, and that REAL, because an imitation of nature; in *speech* there are many true styles, but all FANTASTIC, because all are the creatures of arbitrary fashion.

The noble Author himself seemed to suspect that these two things had but a slender connexion in *nature*, and therefore endeavoured to strengthen the tie by *art*. Hence his figurative expressions of PAINTED SPEECH, for *writing*, in order to clap up a forced alliance between writing and painting; and, on the contrary, STYLE, for manner of painting; to bring painting and writing related. A favourable Critic may possibly say, that the noble Writer had no other purpose, in the use of these elegant figures, than to ornament his language. Perhaps not. It is then only a remarkable example of the truth of an observation made above: "that the principal end of eloquence, as it is employed in human affairs, is to mislead reason, and to cajole the fancy and affections."

On the whole then, all the conclusion we can reasonably draw from this noble Author's remarks on HEAVENLY WORKMANSHIP in *painting* and in *speech*, is only this, that if an inspired Painter were to give us a Picture, it would indeed equal or excel the pencil of Raphael; because here was a *real Archetype* to work by, that is to say, NATURE: but, if we may credit Reason, whose dictates, I am sorry to say, are not always those of his Lordship, an inspired Writer would receive no more assistance from Heaven in his expression, than what was necessary to give his speech the

the essential qualities of all language, namely, CLEARNESS and PRECISION; because here was no *real archetype* to follow; the various modes of eloquence being mostly fantastic, as existing only in capricious custom; and therefore unworthy the notice of a divine Inspirer.

I have now gone through the first part of my Discourse; which proposed to consider the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit as THE GUIDE OF TRUTH, who clears and enlightens the Understanding. In this part, I have endeavoured to vindicate his first Descent and his inspiration of holy Scripture; I have distinguished the mode of that inspiration; I have explained the character of an inspired language; I have inquired into the nature of human eloquence, and have carefully examined the force of our free Reasoners, on every one of these distinct heads.

THE

DOCTRINE OF GRACE;

OR,

THE OFFICE AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

I NOW proceed to the second branch of my Discourse, which is, to consider the Holy Spirit under the idea of THE COMFORTER, who purifies and supports the Will.

And here, his divine power manifested itself in the same miraculous Operations. Sacred Antiquity is very large and full in its accounts of the sudden and entire change made by the Holy Spirit, in the dispositions and manners of those whom it had enlightened; instantaneously effacing all their evil habits, and familiarizing their practice to the performance of every virtuous and pious action.

To this illustrious and triumphant conviction of the truth of Christianity, the very enemies and persecutors of our holy Faith have been forced to bear witness: not only in the serious accounts which some * of them have given of the innocence and virtue of PRIMITIVE

* Pliny the younger, Suetonius, Tacitus, &c.

CHRIS-

CHRISTIANITY; but even in the mockery and ridicule of others *, on the subject of the boasted virtue of water-baptism; which was then commonly accompanied with, and sometimes preceded by, these extraordinary effusions of grace from the *Comforter*. "Come here (say these unhappy Libertines) and see the amazing efficacy of Christian-baptism! whoever is immerged in this water, though before, he were an adulterer, a practised thief or murderer, rises cleansed and purified from all his crimes; and commences, on the instant, a life of temperance, of justice, and of charity." Thus did these impious scorners endeavour to disguise their chagrin at the triumphs of the Spirit over Vice and Paganism, by a sarcastic parody of the grateful exultations of the Christian Pastors. In truth, it was all they had to say; for, after this, they were reduced to seek a forced consolation in the possibility that some NATURAL CAUSE had produced so extraordinary a phenomenon.

It may be worth while, therefore, to inquire whether any such cause can be reasonably assigned.

The enemies of our Faith hope to find it in FANATICISM and SUPERSTITION, the two Passions which the strong impression of a *new* Religion begets, by its HOPES and FEARS, on the mind of man.

Let us see, whether either, or both of these, will account for so *sudden* and *lasting* a conversion, from vice and corruption, to a life of sanctity and virtue.

SUPERSTITION, which only depraves the Reason, without making any impression on those faculties of the mind that most incline the Will to a new bias, never effects any considerable change in the MANNERS. Its utmost force is but just enough to persuade us, that an exact attention to the officious ceremonies of

* Celsus, Julian, &c.

Religion

Religion will be of force to secure us from the evils denounced against vice and immorality; or, at least, that some transient acts of penitence, as the approaches of Death alarm us, will be sufficient to entitle us to the reward of a pure and well-spent Life.

FANATICISM, indeed, shakes and agitates the mind with greater violence: and by instigating those faculties which most influence the Will, frequently forces the Manners from their bent; and sometimes effaces, or obscures, the strongest impressions of custom and nature. But this extraordinary fervour, though always violent, is rarely lasting: never so long as to turn the new System into a habit. So that when its rage subsides, as it very soon does, but where it drives the unhappy victim into downright madness, the late impressed bias on the Will keeps abating, till all the former habitudes recover their relaxed tone.

This is confirmed, not only by the general History of past Fanaticism, but likewise of the present, where we commonly see the final issue of a sudden conversion to be, either a return to an open profligacy of manners, or a deep hypocritical dissimulation of them.

But now if we look into the history of those early Converts, we shall find that their Virtue, from the very first impression of it, had all the ease, sobriety, and moderation of a settled habit; in this they persevered; and adding *grace to grace*, they went on, through life, in one constant tenor, from the first baptismal profession of their Faith by water, to the last awful confirmation of it in their blood. A dreadful period! when Nature, by the very shock, and in the struggle, it then suffers, becomes enabled to dissipate all the fumes of *mental*, as it is frequently observed to do, of *corporeal* intoxication. This it did, in the famous case of the virtuous SAVANAROLA of Florence; whose

whose story is so finely told by Guicciardini in the second and third books of his History. This Man, a genuine Fanatic, if ever there were any, had assumed the personage of a Prophet and inspired Preacher. A Character which he had long and successfully sustained; taken up amidst the distresses and distractions of his Country, and, without doubt, occasioned by them. But, losing his credit in the new Revolutions of Italy, and being brought by his enemies to the stake, he died, after having disavowed his pretensions, on the rack,—he died, I say, sullen and silent, without any remaining symptom of his former Enthusiasm.

Nor could this sudden conversion of the first Christians be the effect of MERE rational conviction. We know it to be morally impossible for Reason, however refined and strengthened by true Philosophy, to root out, on the instant, the inveterate habits of Vice. All that this magisterial Faculty can do is, by constantly repeating her dictates, and inforcing her conclusions, gradually to win over the Will; till, by little and little, the mind accustoms itself to another set of ideas, productive of other practices and other habits. A work of time and labour! as those good men have sufficiently experienced, who, on a mere rational conviction, have attempted and perfected a change in their lives and manners. When therefore we see the deepest impressions of evil custom, and the darkest stains of corrupted nature, thus suddenly wiped out and effaced, to what must we ascribe so total a reform, but to the all-powerful operation of Grace?

But it may be objected, "That there are instances where Enthusiasm alone hath kept men steady in the practice of that virtue which a certain fanatic turn of mind first recommended." Doubtless there have been many good people, who, either through the weakness,

of their reason, or the force of their more refined passions, have been hurried into fanatic fervours, which have supported and confirmed them in their previous innocence of manners. But even here we have sufficient marks to distinguish these better sorts of Enthusiasts, from such of the first Christian Confessors, who were in the happy circumstance of being *found* innocent, when they were led into the practice of all virtue by the Holy Spirit: whose office, as we have said, consisted in this gracious combination, to enlighten the understanding, and to rectify the will. Now, that genial splendour which conducted the first Christians into the knowledge of *all truth*, sufficiently disclosed the divine Inspirer of *all righteousness*. But we see none of that *shining light* ordained and employed to gild the *good works* of Grace, in the morals of innocent Enthusiasts. On the contrary, we often find a more than ordinary ignorance; and sometimes, even an incapacity of making rational conclusions.

Thus was the first part of the promise to *send the* COMFORTER, fulfilled.

CHAP. II.

THE other part, that HE SHOULD ABIDE WITH US FOR EVER, comes next to be considered. We have observed how this likewise hath been verified by the sure deposit of the *Spirit of Truth* in sacred Scripture. Yet this is not the whole of the completion. His present influence, together with the fruits of the past, make the entire subject of the promise. Hence we conclude, that he abides with *the Church*

for ever, as well PERSONALLY in his office of *Comforter*, in supporting the Will, as VIRTUALLY in his office of *Enlightener*, in directing the Understanding.

The only question will be, whether, from the primitive ages down to these latter times, he hath continued to exercise either part of his office in the same extraordinary manner in which he entered upon it, when his descent on the Apostles was accompanied with all the sensible marks of the Divinity.

And this, as it tends to the decision of more than one important question (not only the superstitious claim of CHURCH MIRACLES, but the fanatic pretences to DIVINE INFLUENCES) should be considered more at large.

But here, I shall venture to invert the method of those Divines, who, in their inquiries concerning God's Dispensations, endeavour to prove those supposed facts, which they have preconceived, from the *fitness* which they pretend to have discovered; that is, having determined of what is *fit* for God to do; they, on the credit of this, maintain that he hath done it. On the contrary, I deem it more rational, as well as modest, first to inquire of Scripture, what God hath done: and, when that is known, it will be then time enough to explain the *fitness* of his doings.

Let us see now, what holy Scripture hath delivered concerning the DURATION of the extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit: Which, whether they rested in the Recipient, and manifested themselves in *Grace and Knowledge* transcending the powers of humanity; or whether they extended outwards, in the *gifts of healing*, to the relief of others' infirmities, may, with equal propriety, be called and be accounted MIRACULOUS. In the one case, the *gifted* person was passive; in the other, active.

No

Now the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, has, I presume, determined this question for us, where, in the passage quoted before, on another occasion, he recapitulates the various prerogatives of the Apostolic age. This decisive passage is in these words—*Charity never faileth: but whether there be* PROPHECIES, *they shall fail*; *whether there be* TONGUES, *they shall cease*; *whether there be* KNOWLEDGE, *it shall vanish away* *.

It was the Apostle's purpose, in this place, to exalt CHARITY above all other Christian Graces; and therefore, having, in the preceding words, shewn its superiority to the rest, from its QUALITIES and attributes; he proceeds to urge the advantage still further, from the consideration of its DURABILITY—*Charity never faileth, &c.*

The question is, Whether the superior *duration*, here ascribed to *Charity* over *Prophecies*, *Tongues*, and *Knowledge*, respects only the progress of the Gospel HERE; or whether it extends to the completion of it in its triumphant state, HEREAFTER? The common opinion is, that it respects another life; supported, as should seem, by the Apostle's inforcing his argument on this observation, that *now we see through a glass darkly*; *but then face to face: now we know in part*; *but then shall we know, even as we are known* †; where the different condition of the *two states* are plainly set in opposition to one another.

But the other sense appears to me to be the true; and gives us the Apostle's meaning to this effect: "The virtue of *Charity* is to accompany the Christian Church throughout all its stages here on earth; whereas the gifts of *prophecy*, of strange *tongues*, of supernatural *knowledge*, are only transitory graces, be-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 8. † Ver. 12.

stowed upon the Church during its infirm and infant state, to manifest its divine birth, and to support it against the delusions and the Powers of darkness."

As the words, considered in this sense, convey a most important Doctrine, viz. *the cessation of the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit after the establishment of the Christian faith*, and as this perhaps is the only express declaration of it, recorded in sacred Scripture; I shall endeavour to support my interpretation by considerations drawn from its coherence, in this sense, and in this sense only, with what precedes and follows in the course of the Apostle's argument.

The Church of Corinth, though abundantly enriched with all divine Graces, would not yet suffer the Holy Ghost to do his *perfect work*, in the enlargement of the heart by universal benevolence: but, elated with SPIRITUAL PRIDE (whose property is not to bear with those who differ from us, and to despise those who are beneath us in sublime attainments), split and divided themselves into opposite Sects and Factions: And this unhappy situation not only rendering all their endowments vain and fruitless, but reflecting dishonour on the *Giver of all good things*, the Apostle addresses himself to expose their folly with the utmost of his force and vigour of reasoning.

He proves the superior excellence of *Charity* above all other spiritual graces whatsoever, both in its QUALITIES and its DURATION. The *first three verses** of his argument declare that the other graces without Charity, are neither of use nor ornament in the Christian life: The *next four* † specify the superior qualities of Charity: and the *remaining six* ‡ (of which, the words in question make the *first* §), con-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. † Ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.
‡ Ver 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. § Ver. 8.

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sider Charity under the single advantage of its continuance, when all those other graces, with which they were so foolishly elated, should be withdrawn. *Charity never faileth: but whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away.* In the next two verses * he gives the reason, *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* As much as to say: When that CHRISTIAN LIFE, the lines of which are marked out by the Gospel, shall, by the vital powers of CHARITY on which it is erected, arrive to its full vigour and maturity, then those temporary aids of the Holy Spirit (such as *Tongues, Prophecy,* and *Knowledge,* bestowed with a purpose to subdue the prejudices and scepticism of those without, and to support the weakness and infirmities of those within; and given too, but imperfectly, in proportion to the defects of the human Recipients) shall, like the scaffolding of a Palace now completed, be taken down and removed. And to shew, that the loss of these things will be no longer regretted, when the Church hath advanced from a state of Infancy to Manhood, in the steady exercise of the CHRISTIAN LIFE OF CHARITY, he illustrates this truth by an elegant similitude—*When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child: but when I became a Man, I put away Childish things* †. Yet no one will be so absurd to suppose that it was the Apostle's intention to disgrace these spiritual Gifts by so low a comparison. It was the ABUSE of them only (to which these Corinthians were so prone) that was designed to be corrected by it.

But the Apostle, having represented these extraor-

* Ver. 9, 10. † Ver. 11.

dinary gifts to be as defective in themselves as they are contemptible in their abuse, thought fit to add, that this defect did not proceed from any penurious influx of the Holy Spirit, but from the narrowness of the human recipient; the passages to the Soul being so clogged up with corporeal obstructions, as to be unable to convey to the Sensory any more than an oblique glimpse of the SOVEREIGN GOOD: But that, when we have shaken off this mortal incumbrance, and regained the regions of light and liberty, we shall then intuitively comprehend the whole economy both of NATURE and of GRACE. *For now* (says he) *we see through a glass darkly*, but then face to face: Now I know in part, even as also I am known.* And this observation, which evidently respects a *future state*, led men to understand the Apostle as taking in another life, on which to found that superior *duration*

* Βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι—the *seeing through*, or *in a glass, by an Enigma*, seems, at first view, an odd and incongruous expression, since information by a speculum, of what kind soever, conveys the natural or real image of the reflected object, though that image be seen only faintly and obscurely. But an *Enigma* is not the natural image of the object conveyed, but an arbitrary mark, which, under very foreign ideas, is mysteriously made to stand for the natural image. Yet, if we attend carefully to the subject, we shall find the expression to be very elegant. The Apostle is comparing the knowledge of spiritual things, gained *here*, with that knowledge which we shall gain *hereafter*. Now all our present knowledge being conveyed through the Organs of Sense, the Apostle, by his ἐν αἰνίγματι, would insinuate, that our most correct and sublime ideas of spiritual things are no more the real images of spiritual things, than Enigmas, or mysteriously contrived marks, are the natural or real images of those things to which they are put as Signs. A *glass*, or *speculum*, is therefore used by the Apostle, in this place, to signify the *corporeal organs*; and an *Enigma*, to signify the *representative knowledge*, which the corporeal organs are only capable of producing, when employed about spiritual things.

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which he gives to *Charity*, the subject of his general argument. But they seem to have mistaken the drift of his remark concerning the defects in human knowledge, which was not made (as they suppose) for a *direct* inforcement of the argument in the eighth verse, *Charity never faileth, &c.* but was an *occasional* answer to an objection, which naturally arose from his management of one of the topics in the eleventh, *When I was a child, &c.* For it might have been objected to the Apostle, "By this similitude, you seem to represent the Gospel as first springing up in an infant state, and needing time and culture to bring it to perfection." "No (replies the Apostle); this last Law of God, like the first created Man, came perfect from the hands of its Almighty Framer. But man, to whom it was given, by reason of the imperfections of his present state, arrived only by degrees to the more perfect knowledge and practice of it: and to this gradual advance, from obscure to intuitive science, does the similitude refer." This, I say, seems to have been the source of the error: and yet the Apostle's concluding observation was sufficient to have set these critics right, and to have shewn them, that the superior duration of Charity referred to the present life only.—*And* NOW *abideth* FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY, *these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.* Which is in effect to say, "You may now perhaps object, that this quality of *superior duration* is not peculiar or confined to *Charity*, but belongs equally to those two other Christian graces, *Faith* and *Hope*, which travel through with the Church of God, and continue to support and adorn it, in all its revolutions here on earth, when *Prophecy*, *Tongues*, and *Knowledge*, shall long have *failed* and *ceased*, and *vanished away*: So that, with regard to DURATION, *Faith* and *Hope*

Hope share with *Charity*, in this advantage, over the other transient endowments of the Spirit." "I agree (replies the Apostle) thus far to the Objection, that they are all three joint sharers in this prerogative; but still, I say, THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY: And in the beginning of my argument (says he) I have given the reason, in the observation, that *Though I have all* FAITH *so that I could remove mountains, and though I give my body to be burned* [in sure and certain HOPE of a resurrection] *and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* The reason is on account of the superior qualities of *Charity:* it hath those which *Faith* and *Hope* have not, *she seeketh not her own, &c.* as well as those which *Faith* and *Hope* have, and are most essential to them, for *she* BELIEVETH *all things, she* HOPETH *all things.*" It is thus the Apostle answers concealed objections; and at the same time instructs the unwary reader, with what caution and application he should come to the study of that profound reasoning with which all his Epistles abound.

But now, suppose the *superior duration* of Charity to take in the consideration of another life, and the Apostle never could have said, that *Faith* and *Hope* had the prerogative of *remaining*, or of having an equal abiding with *Charity*, when both *faith* and *hope* will be swallowed up in fruition*.

From

* The late Bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, in his first volume of Sermons, contends for the common interpretation of this passage; and, to remove the difficulty of *faith* and *hope*'s being said to *abide* with *Charity* in a future state, argues thus—"*Charity* "and universal benevolence is the very grace and ornament of "Heaven. Nor can *faith* and *hope* ever be parted from TRUE "RELIGION; for there is no Being so great as not to depend on "*faith in God*, in his power and wisdom, or to be above *hoping* "*any thing* from his goodness and benevolence," p. 377. How St. Paul is speaking of one thing, and the Bishop, as usual, and

From the whole, then, of this account of *Charity*, it evidently appears, that THE MIRACULOUS POWERS OF THE CHURCH WERE TO CEASE ON ITS PERFECT ESTABLISHMENT; as well those which relieved corporeal, as those which administered aid to spiritual, distresses: and consequently, that SUPERSTITION and FANATICISM equally laboured under the wound inflicted on them by the hand of the Apostle, when he made this virtual Declaration of the total withdrawing those *Powers*.

Here especially, all the *superstitious* and *fanatical* pretences of the Church of Rome, to supernatural powers, are detected and exposed; not only the gift of INFALLIBILITY, which comprehends *all Mysteries and all Knowledge*; and the work of TRANSUBSTANTIATION, which comprehends *all Faith*, not *to remove*, but to *make*, *mountains*; but likewise all the LEGENDARY MIRACLES of their Hierarchy in general, and of their canonized Saints in particular. In which pretences, to observe it by the way, the blunder seems to be as glaring as the imposture: St. Paul reckons the STATE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION not to be the STATE OF MIRACLES, but that of CHARITY. *For we know in part* (says he) *and we prophesy in part: but when* THAT WHICH IS PERFECT *is come, then that which is in part shall be done away* *. What is *that perfect*

another. The Apostle's *faith* and *hope* are CHRISTIAN GRACES; that is, Faith in the *Messiah the Redeemer*, and Hope in the *Resurrection of the dead*, both of which hereafter will be, as is said above, swallowed up in fruition. The Preacher, in order to support a point, puts the change upon us, and, for the Apostle's *faith and hope*, gives us his own: a *faith and hope* at large, and in the air, such as will *abide* indeed, while we have any being, but such as, on the same principles of interpretation, will give abidance to *Knowledge* likewise, although the sacred Writer expressly tells us, *it is to vanish away*.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

perfect thing *which was to come*; and which the Corinthians of this time so much wanted? What but that which he had so highly extolled, the State of CHARITY? So that as this advanced, the imperfect state of MIRACLES was to recede, and *be done away*. Yet in the Church of Rome, the state of SAINTSHIP, which is *their state of perfection*, is supported by miracles; whilst *St. Paul's state* of *perfection*, that of CHARITY, was so little acknowledged or understood, that one of their greatest Saints, and most abounding in *miraculous* endowments, was St. Dominic, the founder of the INQUISITION. Indeed, if the Apostle's reasoning would bear this inference, that *Miracles* were not only to remain till *Charity* had done *its perfect work*, but till it had perfectly done its work, I know of no Church that has a better claim to the continued exercise of those Powers than the CHURCH OF ROME. But whatsoever need she may have, she fails so wretchedly in her most pompous exhibitions of them, that we may well regard ROMISH MIRACLES in the lowest rank of those *childish things*, which, the Apostle says, men and churches should be ashamed of, and *put away*, when they come to years of discretion.

CHAP. III.

HAVING now established the FACT, that *miraculous gifts* were to pass away with the first ages of the Church, we may safely and reasonably inquire into the FITNESS OF THE THING.

There appears to have been two causes of the *extraordinary* operations of the Holy Spirit: The manifes-

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tation of his Mission as it was predicted, and the comfort and instruction of a suffering Church, as it was promised.

To the first, we have observed, that in the early propagation of our holy Faith, it was fit the SANCTIFIER, as well as the REDEEMER, should support his presence by Miracles. But the same considerations which shew this *fitness* to be no more, in the one case shew it likewise in the other. For the DIVINE ORIGINAL of our *Faith* being once established, it supports itself ever after on the same credibility of human testimony, which all other truths do, that are founded on facts.

1. As to his extraordinary operations for the comfort and instruction of the Church, we may observe that, on his first descent upon the Apostles, he found their minds rude and uninformed; strangers to all celestial knowledge; prejudiced in favour of a *carnal Law*, and utterly averse to the genius of the *everlasting Gospel*. The minds of these he illuminated; and, by degrees, led into all the truths necessary for the Professors of the Faith to know, or for the Propagators of it to teach. For *a rule of Faith* not being yet completed, some extraordinary infusion of his Virtue was still necessary, both to regulate the Faith of him who received it, and to constitute the Authority of him who was to communicate, of what he had received, to others. But when now the *Rule of faith* was perfected in an authentic collection of the Apostolic Writings, part of this office was transferred upon the Sacred Canon *; and his enlightened grace was not to be expected in so abundant an effusion as would make the Recipients *infallible Guides* to others, but only in a measure adequate to the direction of themselves.

* See pp. 271, 272

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These reasons for the change of economy, in the dispensations of the Holy Spirit, are sufficient to discredit the false confidence of modern FANATICS, who pretend to as high a degree of divine communications as if no such *Rule of Faith* was in being; or at least, as if that Rule was so obscure as to need the further assistance of the Holy Spirit to explain his own meaning; or so imperfect as to need a new inspiration to supply its wants.—But these men read the History of the dispensations to the first Propagators of our holy Faith: they look with admiration on the privileges and powers conferred on those chosen Instruments: their imagination grows heated: they forget the difference between the *present* and the *past* economy of things: they seem to feel the impressions they hear of; and they assume the airs, and mimic the Authority of Prophets and Apostles.

2. Again, the nature and genius of the Gospel were so averse to all the religious Institutions of the World, that the whole strength of human prejudices was set in opposition to it. To overcome the obstinacy and violence of these prejudices, nothing less than the power of the *Holy One* was sufficient. HE did the work of Man's Conversion; and reconciled an unbelieving world to God. At present, whatever there may be remaining of the bias of prejudice (as such will mix itself even with our best conclusions), it draws the other way. So much then of his task was finished; and the Faith, from thenceforth, had a favourable hearing. Indeed, were we to make our estimate of the present State of the religious World from the Journals of modern Fanatics, we should be tempted still to think ourselves in a land of Pagans, with all their prejudices full blown upon them. For the account they give us of their provincial Missions always run

on in such strains as these—The *name of Jesus* is preached up in this City; the *glad tidings of the Gospel* conveyed to that Hamlet; a *new light springs up* in a land of darkness; and *life and immortality* is now first offered to those who *sit in the shadow of death*.

3. A further reason for the abatement of the influences of the supporting spirit of Grace is the peace and security of the CHURCH. There was a time when the Powers of this world were combined together for its destruction. At such a period, nothing but superior aid from Above could support humanity in sustaining so great a conflict as that which the holy Martyrs encountered with joy and rapture; the horrors of death in torment. But now the profession of the Christian Faith is attended with ease and honour; and the conviction, which the weight of human testimony, and the conclusions of human reason afford us, of its truth, is abundantly sufficient to support us in our religious perseverance.

But the obstinate and continued claims of FANATICS in all Ages, to this primitive abundance of the Spirit, may make it expedient to examine their pretensions yet more minutely and exactly. And to this inquiry, Scripture itself, which foresaw and foretold the evil, directs us to the remedy, where it exhorts us to TRY THE SPIRITS. *Beloved, believe not every spirit* (says St. John), *but try the Spirits whether they be of God: because many false Prophets are gone out into the World**. At the time this precept was given, there was a more than ordinary attention requisite to guard against the delusions of false Prophets: For, the abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit on the rising Religion gave encouragement to Impostors to counterfeit, and

* 1 John iv. 1

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a handle to Enthusiasts to mimic, all that was equivocal in its operations.

Hence we find that, amongst the various endowments of the primitive Church, some of which were to correct Gainsayers, and others to edify Believers, there was one of the mixed kind, of special use to support the dignity, and to vindicate the divine original of all the rest; by detecting Impostors, who crept in amongst the truly inspired: and this, we have seen, the Apostle called, the DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. With this Gift, Peter detected Simon the Magician; and with this, Paul confounded Elymas the Sorcerer.

But when *extraordinary inspiration* itself had ceased, the false pretence to it, for some wise ends of Providence, to us unknown, still continued to infect the Church with its impious Mummeries; and while that Virtue *(the discerning of spirits)*, whose office was to detect them, was withdrawn with the rest of the inspired graces, the Command *to try the spirits whether they were of God*, still remained in force. But to *try* without a faculty of *discerning*, would be a dangerous, or at best, an impertinent employment.

Now from this unreasonable task we are delivered by the gracious providence of the Holy Spirit; who provided that those whom he had endowed with the gift of *discerning of Spirits* should leave behind them some Rules whereby the Faithful of all ages might be qualified to *try the spirits*, and be thereby enabled to defend themselves from the seduction of error and imposture: because, says the advice, *many false Prophets are gone out into the World.*

If the *false Prophet* pretend to a *character foretold*, then we are bid to *search the Scriptures* *, to see if they *testify* of such a Character. Thus the *Bereans*

* John v. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for they testify of me.*

are esteemed of more *noble* and generous sentiments than their Neighbours, for this very point of wisdom, *the searching the Scriptures daily to find whether those things were so* *.

But if the *false Prophet* pretend only to some extraordinary measure of the Spirit, then we are directed to *try* that *Spirit* by applying to it the followihg Characters of real inspiration—THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE; THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE INTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY, AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY †.

It is worthy our notice, that, in this rule or direction for the *trial of spirits*, the marks of real inspiration are to be applied only NEGATIVELY: that is, we may safely pronounce, that the man in whom they are not found, hath not the Spirit of God, or *the wisdom which is from above:* while on the other hand, we are not to conclude, that he in whom any or all of them are found, is, from this circumstance alone, endowed with any *extraordinary* measure of the Holy Spirit; since they may be no other than those ordinary graces which arise from the knowledge of, and obedience to, God's Will as contained in sacred Scripture. So that although such a one may be truly said to be possessed of *the wisdom which is from above*, it is not that which comes to him by way of inspiration, the thing here in question.

Thus we see, the Apostle's Rule carries, in its very nature, the evidence of its divine original. for the assistance wanted in the *trial of spirits*, since these extraordinary powers were withdrawn, was only such a set of Marks as was rather fitted to detect Impostors, than to assure the truth of a Character not now to be expected.

* Acts xvii. 11. † James iii. 17.

This the Reader should have in mind, when we bring him to apply these marks to the features of modern Fanaticism; especially as they are seen in the famed Leader of the METHODISTS, Mr. JOHN WESLEY; and not *seen* neither, as Sancho Pancho *saw* his mistress, *by hearsay* (which indeed has been too much the custom, in the representations of this transcendent man), but as he appears in person in his own JOURNALS: for by those indelible marks alone, there traced out, and by his own pen, I propose to TRY, in him, chiefly, THE SPIRITS of all modern Pretenders to supernatural Powers.

CHAP. IV.

AND that I may not be suspected of combating a Phantom, it will be proper first of all to shew that this extraordinary man hath, in fact, laid claim to almost every Apostolic gift and grace; and in as full and ample a measure as they were possessed of old.

But as a good Actor will first prepare his Scene, he hath carried us back, by the magic of his dramatic powers, into all the wonders of the primitive Times; where we meet the Devil unchained and let loose, to exert his last efforts against the *new* Religion: As, on the other hand, to oppose to his infernal rage, we see, with the same evidence, an abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit poured out upon this *rising* Church. And now, every thing being well prepared, Both these Powers stand ready to act their parts, by the time our Apostle thinks fit to appear upon the Stage.

His JOURNALS are full of the Alarms which he gave the Devil, and of the mortifications which the Devil ga-

gave him.—"The Devil (says he) knew his kingdom "shook, and therefore stirred up his servants to ring "bells, and make all the noise they could *."—"The "*Devil's Children* fought valiantly for their Master, "that his kingdom should not be destroyed: And "many stones fell on my right hand and on my left †." "Some or other of the *Children of Belial* had laboured "to disturb us several nights before ‡." Nay, so accustomed was he to these conflicts with the *Evil One*, that it was even matter of surprise to him, to find the Enemy, once upon a time, reserved and *still*; till he reflected, that it was because *his Goods were in peace*. "I preached—as yet I have found only one "person amongst them, who knew the love of God, "before my Brother came. No wonder the Devil "was so still: for *his Goods were in peace* §." Another instance which he gives us, of this peaceable convention between his Congregation and the Devil, is in one of his northern excursions. "Wed. 29. I preached at "Durham to a QUIET, STUPID Congregation ||." But this never lasted long wherever he came; for he had always the skill of curing the spiritual lethargy by a frenzy.

When the Devil had set the mob on work, he then, like other Politicians, retired to better company; such as the two Mr. Wesleys and the Saints. But, as this sad and solemn meeting was not to his taste, he tried to *buffet* them into a better humour. "I was a "little surprised at some who were *buffetted* of "Satan in an unusual manner by such a *spirit of* "*laughter*—I knew the same thing ten or eleven

* Journal from 1, Nov. 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 37.
† Ibid. p. 82. ‡ Ibid. p. 31.
§ Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 29.
|| Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 16.

" years ago. Part of Sunday my Brother and I then " used to spend in walking in the meadows and " singing Psalms. But one day, just as we were be- " ginning to sing, he burst out into a *loud laughter.* " I began to be very angry, and presently after to " laugh as loud as he.—We were ready to tear our- " selves in pieces, but were forced to go home with- " out singing another line*." From the Head, these *buffettings* (which, not to overload the Devil, I will, for once, venture to call *hysterical)* descended, and were plentifully bestowed, upon the Members. And, " one evening (says he) such a *spirit of laughter* was " amongst us, that many were much offended. But " the attention of all was soon fixed upon poor " L——a S——; one so violently and variously torn " of the EVIL ONE did I never see before. Some- " times she *laughed,* then broke out into cursing and " blaspheming †," &c. On this occasion, he relates a fact, which, though He seems not to have turned to a proper use, the sober and attentive Reader may. —" Our outward trials indeed were now removed, " and peace was in all our borders. But so much " the more did inward trials abound, *and if one* " *member suffered, all the members suffered with it.* " So strange a SYMPATHY did I never observe before: " whatever considerable temptation fell on any one, " unaccountably spreading itself to the rest. So that " exceeding few were able to escape it ‡." In these various struggles, the Devil was at length tired out; and Mr. Wesley forces him into close quarters; to betake himself to the bodies of friend or foe indifferently, just as he could find opportunity or entertainment. And now comes on the shining part of our Apostle's

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 37.
† Ibid. p. 38. ‡ Ibid. p. 37.

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exploits, the driving him out, in the face of the whole Congregation, by EXORCISMS and spiritual Ejectments.

But if Evil thus abounded, Grace did much more abound in this memorable Æra, when Mr. John Wesley first went out upon his Mission. The Spirit overcame all resistance, broke down all the strongholds of *Sin*, and, what Mr. Wesley was much more set against, of INSENSIBILITY.——"So many living "Witnesses (says he) hath God given, that *his hand* "*is* STILL *stretched out to heal*, and that *signs and* "*wonders are even* NOW *wrought by his holy Child*, "*Jesus* *." For, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*, it once again, as of old, *perfected praise*; the *young men saw visions, and the old men dreamed dreams.*

"Amongst the poor Colliers at Placey, John Lane, "then *nine or ten years old*, was one of the first who "found peace with God. From that hour he continued "to walk day and night in the light of his countenance. "I saw him last year longing to be with Christ †," &c. —"I enquired more particularly of Mrs. N. con- "cerning her little Son. She said, He appeared to "have a continual fear of God, and an awful sense "of his presence; that he frequently went to prayers "by himself: that he had an exceeding great tender- "ness of Conscience, being sensible of the least sin.— "A few days since he broke out into prayers aloud, "and then said, Mamma, I shall go to Heaven soon— "and you will go there too, and my Papa; but you "will not go so soon." On which Mr. Wesley very judiciously observes, "When the Holy Ghost teaches, "is there any delay in learning? This Child was then

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739.

† Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 18.

"just *three years old.* A year or two after he died in "peace *."

——"I heard (says he) a surprising account of "a young woman of Manchester, which I received "from her own mouth. She said, I was sitting in the "house while one read the passion hymn. I had "always gone to Church, and had never heard any of "the methodist preachers. On a sudden I saw our "Saviour on the Cross, as plain as if it had been with "my bodily eyes.—Then I saw as it were Heaven "open, and God sitting upon his Throne. And I saw "a large book, in which all my sins were written †," &c. But this was nothing to the vision of S—— T——, (a girl of *ten years and three quarters old),* which takes up between three and four pages in the telling; so that partly for the length, but principally because I suspect Mr. J. Wesley intended it only for the solace of his *babes and sucklings,* for whose use this discourse is not intended, I shall only point to the Journal where the wonderful adventure is related ‡. For the same reason, I shall pass over many of the *Dreams and Visions.*

All these wonders were not worked for nothing. The Spirit of the Lord was gone out, and it did not stop till it had manifested itself, in the last efforts of its power, THE NEW BIRTH: But it went not out, as of old, in the *still, small voice,* but in storms and tempests, in cries and ecstacies, in tumults and confusion; and when Nature was exhausted, then Grace had done its work. But he tells us, his correspondents hearing of *this strange* affair, enquired of him, *how can these things be?* They cautioned him *not to*

* Journ. from Oct. 27, 1734, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 133.

† Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 94.

‡ Journ. from Oct. 27, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 141, *& seq.*

regar

regard visions or dreams, or to fancy people had remission of sins because of their cries or tears, &c. To this, he tells us, he answered; "You deny that God "does now work these effects: at least that he works "them in this manner. I affirm both. I have seen "very many persons changed in a moment from the "spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, "joy, and peace.—What I have to say touching *visions* "or *dreams* is this: I know several persons in whom "this great change was wrought in a dream, or during "a strong representation to the eye of their mind, of "Christ either on the Cross or in glory *."

But here unhappily, as is usual in these matters, the symptoms of *Grace* and of *Perdition* were so interwoven and confounded with one another, that our Apostle himself is sometimes at a loss to distinguish the hand; and to determine, with certainty, who had the largest share in the WORK, GOD or the DEVIL; insomuch that a Manichean might have greatly availed himself of this untoward circumstance. Mr. J. Wesley had been grieved, and the Spirit of God had been grieved likewise, at the scandal given by some of his own flock, who "blasphemed the work, and imputed "it either to Nature or the force of Imagination and "Animal-spirits, or even to the delusion of the "Devil †."—"Many (says he) were deeply convinced; "but none were delivered from that painful conviction. "*The Children came to the* BIRTH, *but there was not* "*strength to* BRING FORTH. I fear we have grieved "the Spirit of the jealous God, by questioning his "work ‡." Yet these pangs of the NEW BIRTH becoming, on certain occasions, more violent, and more general than ordinary, and even found to be taking

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 48, 49.
† Ibid. p. 59. ‡ Ibid. p. 68.

and infectious,—the Apostle himself was staggered, and seemed ready to recant. "These symptoms I can "no more impute to any natural cause, than to the "Spirit of God. I make no doubt it was SATAN "tearing them as they were coming to Christ. And "hence proceeded those grievous cries, whereby he "might design both to discredit the work of God, "and to affright fearful people from hearing that word "whereby their Souls might be saved*." But since these Symptoms were universal and inseparable from the *new birth*, I rather think, and I will venture to say, as it is only raising the Catachresis one step higher, that the Devil was here only in the office of *Man-Midwife* to the *new birth*. And Mr. Wesley himself, on second thoughts, seems not much averse to this conceit, as appears from the following relation:— "I visited (says he) a poor old woman a mile or two "from the Town. Her trials had been uncommon; "inexpressible agonies of mind joined with all sorts of "bodily pain, not (it seemed) from any natural cause, "but the *direct operation of Satan:* Her joys were "now as uncommon; she had little time to sleep, "having for several months last past seen, as it were, "the *unclouded face of God*, and praised him day and "night†."

CHAP. V.

SUCH was the EVANGELIC STATE of things when Mr. J. Wesley first entered on this Ministry: who, seeing himself surrounded with subjects so harmoniously disposed to obey the touch of a master, thus

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743.

† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 60.

triumphant!

triumphantly exults:—"Full as I was, I knew not "where to begin, till my Testament opened on these "words, *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sin-* "*ners, to repentance:* In applying which, my soul "was so enlarged, that methought I could have cried "out (in another sense than poor, vain Archimedes) "*Give me where to stand, and I will* SHAKE THE "EARTH*." A bravado that would have suited Ignatius Loiola in his first slippery ecstacies in the mire, as the World has sufficiently experienced. How it became our adventurer, on his first setting out, the World may be brought to know in good time.

Here then was a Scene well prepared for a good Actor, and excellently fitted up for the part he was disposed to play, which, as we have said, was that of an APOSTLE. And, to do him justice, he hath exhibited it with such splendor, that, of all the Apostolic gifts and graces, there is but one with which we find him not adorned, viz. the *gift of tongues*; and as to this, the learned Mr. J. Wesley may reply with the learn . Paul, *he already spoke with tongues more than they all.* For the rest, whether they were *prophecy—supernatural aids in his ministry—healing the sick—casting out Devils*—or *inflicting divine vengeance on his opposers*, he had them all, as we understand by his *journals*, in abundant measure.

We will begin (as is fitting) where he himself began, with declaring his MISSION. "A multitude of people "got together in the house, yard, and street, far more "than my voice could reach. I cried aloud to as "many of them as could hear, *All things are ready:* "*come ye to the marriage.* I then DELIVERED MY "MESSAGE. So before ten we took boat†," &c.

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739.

† Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 29.

Yet,

Yet, like Moses, he was at first a little mutinous.—"From the directions I received from God this day, "touching an affair of the greatest importance, I "could not but observe the mistake of those who "assert, 'God will not answer your prayer, unless "your heart be wholly resigned to his will.' *My heart "was not entirely resigned to his will.* Yet I know "and am assured, he heard my voice, and sent forth "his light and his truth *."

PROPHECY or *Speaking by the Spirit*, the first and most essential quality of a divine Messenger, he had at will. "We had (says he) a watch night at the Chapel: "being weak in body, I was afraid I could not go "through it. But the longer I spoke, the more "strength I had. Insomuch that at twelve o'clock all "my weariness and weakness was gone; and I was "as one refreshed with wine †."—"Several of the "Gentry desired to stay at the meeting of the Society, "to whom I explained the nature of inward Religion, "*words flowing upon me faster than I could speak* ‡."—"I intended to have given an exhortation to the "Society. But as soon as we met, the *Spirit of Sup-"plication fell upon us*, so that I could hardly do any "thing but pray and give thanks, till it was time for "us to part §." But the Spirit soon came down in a torrent that took away all utterance.—"In the evening "the word of God was indeed quick and powerful. "Afterwards, I desired the men as well as women to "meet. But I could not speak to them. *The Spirit*

* Journ. from his embarking for Georgia, to his return to London, p. 37.

† Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p 32.

‡ Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 87.

§ Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 84, 85.

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" *of prayer was so poured upon us all,* that we could " only speak to God *."

The *exterior* assistances in his Ministry were no less signal than the *interior*.—" Many were seated on a " large wall adjoining, which, being built of loose " stones, in the middle of the Sermon all fell down at " once. *I never saw, heard, nor read, of such a thing* " *before.* The whole wall and the persons sitting upon " it sunk down together, none of them screaming out, " and very few altering their posture. And not one " was hurt at all; but they appeared sitting at the " bottom, just as they sat at the top. Nor was there " any interruption either of my speaking, or of the " attention of the hearers †." The next rises in due gradation. An unruly *mob* became of a sudden as harmless as the *stones*. Though, had they met, and opposed the ministry, *together*, one does not know what might have happened.—" The mob had just " broke open the door, when we came into the lower " room; and exactly while they burst in at one door, " we walked out at the other. *Nor did one man take* " *any notice of us*, though we were within five yards " of each other ‡." Without doubt they were struck *blind*; though, in imitation of the modest silence of the Evangelist, who relates the like adventure of the blessed Jesus, he forbears the express mention of this stupendous miracle.—The next and more powerful operation was on his female friends; and these, he as fairly struck *dumb* —" The whole multitude were silent, while I " was speaking. Not a whisper was heard. But the " moment I had done, the *Chain fell off their tongues.* " I was ally surprised. Surely never was such a

* Journ. om Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 104.
† Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 23.
‡ Ibid. p. 57.

" cackling

" cackling made on the banks of Cayster, or the Com-
" mon of Sedgmoor *." ..And *to chain up the tongues* of five hundred cackling gossips, he held; and with great reason, an exploit worth recording. Indeed he appears to have taken the most effectual method with them, that is, to *out-clamour* them: For thus he measures out his own Stentoronic voice.—" Observing that
" several sat on the side of the opposite hill, I after-
" wards desired one to measure the ground; and we
" found it was sevenscore yards from the place where
" I had stood. Yet the people there heard perfectly
" well. I did not think any human voice could have
" reached so far †." And as, on proper occasions, every courteous Knight-Errant has condescended to let his *horse* into a share of the adventure, so our Spiritual Martialist, unwilling to break so good a custom, has divided (as St. Martin did his cloak with the Beggar) the next exploit of price with his Beast.
" My horse was exceeding lame—we could not dis-
" cern what it was that was amiss, and yet he could
" scarce set his foot on the ground.—My head ached
" more than it had done for some months (what I
" here aver is the naked fact; let every man *account*
" *for it* as he sees good). I then thought, 'Cannot
" God heal either man or beast, by any means, or
" *without any!*' Immediately my weariness and head-
" ach ceased, and my Horse's lameness *in the same*
" *instant*. Nor did he halt any more either that day
" or the next. *A very odd accident this also* ‡."

Come we next to his GIFT OF HEALING. One of his miracles of this kind, had, it seems, been brought in question; on which occasion, he thus explains

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 96.
† Journ. from July 20, 1753, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 10.
‡ Journ. from Oct 27, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746.

hims

himself—"Miracle or no Miracle, the fact is plain. "W. Kirkman is, I apprehend, still alive and able to "certify for himself, that he had that cough threescore "years, and since that time [viz. the miraculous aid "afforded him] it had not returned *." In the pamphlet where this extraordinary case was first recorded, Mr. Wesley asks, Whether any one could suppose, that if he had performed it by his skill in physic, he should not have been ready to do honour to himself, rather than transfer that honour to another? If Mr. Wesley be serious in this question, he is the dupe of his spiritual ambition. The Character of a great Saint is infinitely more flattering to the Head of a Sect than that of a great Physician.—But to proceed—"I administered the Sacrament to R. A. Some years ago he found peace with God, and was freed at once "without any human means from a distemper *naturally* "*incurable* †." But acute as well as chronical disorders fly his sacred presence.—"I found (says he) "Mr. Lunell in so violent a fever, that there was "little hope of his life. *He revived the moment he* "*saw me*, and fell into a breathing sweat. He began "to recover from that time. *Perhaps for this also* "*was I sent* ‡." "In the evening I called upon Anne "Calcut. She had been speechless for some time. "But almost as soon as we began to pray, God re-"stored her speech. She then witnessed a good "confession indeed. I expected to see her no more. "*But*, FROM THAT HOUR, THE FEVER LEFT HER, "and in a few days she arose and walked, glorify-"ing God §."—"I visited several of the Sick. Most

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 10, 1750, p. 123.
† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 34.
‡ Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 34.
§ Ib. id.

"of

" of them were ill of the spotted Fever; which, they " informed me, had been extremely mortal, few per- " sons recovering from it. But God had said, HI- " THERTO SHALT THOU COME. I believe there was " NOT ONE *with whom we were, but he recovered**."— " They told me the Physician said, he did not expect " Mr. Meyrick would live till the morning. I went to " him, but his pulse was gone. He had been speech- " less and senseless for some time. A few of us " immediately joined in prayer (I relate *the naked* " *fact*). Before we had done, his sense and his speech " returned. Now he that will account for this by " *natural causes*, has my *free leave*. I chuse to say, " THIS IS THE POWER OF GOD†." However, gra- cious as this *free leave* is, I would not, Reader! be the man to advise you to trust to it. Saints are vi dictive: He has fairly told you what he *chuses* to cal it. And after this, who can tell how far he may think the honour of God concerned in making so free with his Messenger as to take him at his word, having before solemnly assured you, of " many living wit- " nesses which God hath given, that *His hand is* STILL " *stretched out to heal; and that signs and wonders* " *are* even NOW, wrought by his holy Child JESUS‡?"

From the cure of *natural* diseases, proceed we to the *supernatural*, or, saving your presence, to the CASTING OUT OF DEVILS. Having related, by way of prelude, the extravagancies of a furious female De- moniac of nineteen or twenty years of age, whom he set to rights without much ceremony; he proceeds immediately to another of the same Sex; but her he exorcises in form, and according to the true Roman

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 61.
† Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1745, p. 81.
‡ Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 40.

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fashion.—" I was sent for to one in Bristol—She lay " on the ground furiously gnashing her teeth, and " after a while roared aloud. It was not easy for " three or four persons to hold her, *especially when* " *the name of Jesus was named.* We prayed; the " violence of her symptoms ceased, *though, without* " *a complete deliverance.* In the evening, being sent " for to her again, I was unwilling, indeed afraid to " go; thinking it would not avail, unless some, who " were *strong in faith,* were to wrestle with God for " her. I opened my Testament on these words—*I* " *was afraid, and went and hid my talent in the earth.* " I stood reproved, and went immediately. She began " screaming before I came into the room, then broke " out into a horrid laughter mixt with blasphemy, " grievous to hear. One who, from many circum- " stances, apprehended a preternatural Agent to be " concerned in this, asking, How didst thou dare to " enter into a Christian? was answered, *She is no* " *Christian. She is mine.* Q. Dost thou not tremble " at the name of Jesus? No words followed, but *she* " *shrunk back, and trembled exceedingly.* Q. Art " thou not encreasing thy own damnation? It was " faintly answered. *Ay, ay:* which was followed by " fresh cursing and blaspheming. My Brother coming " in, she cried out, *Preacher! Field-Preacher, I* " *do not love field-preaching.* This was repeated two " hours together, with spittings and all the expres- " sions of strong aversion. And now it was that " God shewed he heareth the Prayer—She was filled " with peace, and knew that the *Son of Wickedness* " *was departed from her.*"—This is very well: The next is not inferior—" I was sent for to Kingswood " again" [namely to the young woman with whom he concludes these atchievements.] " A violent rain began

J. " just

" just as I set out, so that I was thoroughly wet in a " few minutes. Just at that time the woman (then " three miles off) cried out, *Yonder comes Wesley* " *galloping as fast as he can.* When I was come, I " was quite cold and dead, and fitter for sleep than " prayer. She burst out into a horrid laughter, and " said, *No power, no power; no faith, no faith: She* " *is mine. Her Soul is mine, I have her, and will* " *not let go.* We begged of God to increase our " faith.—One, who was clearly convinced this was no " natural disorder, said, *I think Satan is let loose.* " I FEAR HE WILL NOT STOP HERE; and added, I " command thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, to " tell if thou hast commission to torment any other " Soul. It was immediately answered, *I have;* " *L——y C——r and S——h J——s*, two wh[illegible] " lived at some distance, and were *then* in perfec[illegible] " health *." In which, I dare say, they did not lon[illegible] continue, after the Exorcist had thus consigned them over to Satan, now *let loose* to do Mr. Wesley honour. But what is most material (if we may believe Him or his spiritual Coadjutor) is, that Mr. Wesley's *new birth only* makes the *Christian*; and that the Devil hates *field-preaching*. To evince these great Truths, seems to have been the end both of the Possessions and of the Exorcisms. POPERY and PURITANISM, it is to be observed, have, at times, for the like righteous ends, received equal credit from the same reverend Testimonies, the Devil and the Priest:—as the curious may read with pleasure in the *Detection* of two famous impostures carried on in each of those Quarters, and recorded by the elegant pen of

* Journ. from Aug. 12. 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, pp. 92, 9[illegible] & seq.

Dr. Samuel HARSNET *, bishop of Norwich, and afterwards Archbishop of York. By which we may gather, that the Inhabitants below are divided into Sects as well as those above; and that there are *Popish*, *Puritan*, and *Methodist*, DEVILS; who have all, in their turns, been forced to answer to Interrogatories; and to depose in honour of the Sect they persecuted, at the expence of that to which they belonged.

Such were the blessings which Mr. Wesley bestowed upon his Friends: for his Enemies he had other things in store; and those no small ones, the exterminating JUDGMENTS OF HEAVEN. Yet still the treatment was strictly Apostolical. "I preached (says he) at "Darlaston, late a den of Lions: But most of the "fiercest of them *God had called away by* A TRAIN "OF AMAZING STROKES; and those that remain "are now as lambs †." The corrections, we see, as those of Heaven should, had their proper effect.— "I preached at R——, once a place of furious riot "and persecution; but quiet and calm, since the "*bitter Rector is gone to give* AN ACCOUNT OF "HIMSELF TO GOD ‡."—"Hence we rode to T——, "where the Minister was slowly recovering from a "violent fit of the Palsy, with which he was struck "*immediately* after he had been preaching a virulent "Sermon against the *Methodists* §."—"The Rev. "Mr. ——— preached and inveighed very much "against the novel sect, the upstart *Methodists*— "Shortly after, he was to preach [the same sermon

* *A declaration of egregious Popish impostures, &c.* Lond. 1603. Q. *Declaration of Puritan impostures, in the case of Darrel, &c.* Lond. 1599. Q.

† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 81.

‡ Journ from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 11.

§ Ibid. p. 23.

" again]. He had named the text twice, when he " was suddenly seized with a rattling in his throat, " attended with a hideous groaning. He fell back- " ward against the door of the pulpit; was carried " away, as it seemed, dead into the vestry. In two " or three days he recovered his senses, and the Sunday " following, DIED *."

" One of the chief of those who came to make the " disturbance on the first instant, had HANGED HIM- " SELF. A second of them had been for some days " in strong pain, and had many times sent to desire " our prayers. A third came to me himself, and con- " fessed, he was hired that night and made drunk on " purpose: But when he came to the door, *he knew* " *not what was the matter*, he could not *stir* nor *open* " *his mouth* †." Here, by ill luck, the miracle suffers for drunkenness alone is but too apt to deprive a man of his faculties of speech and local motion. " I was " quite surprised when I heard Mr. R— — preach. " That soft, smooth, tuneful voice, which he so often " employed to *blaspheme the Work of God*, was lost " without hope of recovery. All means had been tried, " but none took place. He now spoke in a manner " SHOCKING TO HEAR ‡," &c.—" Mr. C. spoke so " much in favour of the Rioters, that they were all " discharged—a few days after, Mr. C. walking over " the same field *dropt down, and spoke no more.* " Surely the MERCY of God would not suffer a well- " meaning man to be any longer a tool to *Persecu-* " *tors* §."—" Calling at Newgate [in Bristol] I was " informed that the poor wretches under sentence of

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 103, 104.
† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741.
‡ Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 79.
§ Ibid. p. 108.

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" death were earnestly desiring to speak with me; " but that it could not be: Alderman Beecher having " just then sent an express order, that they should " not. I CITE *Alderman Beecher to answer for these* " *Souls at the judgment-seat of Christ* *."

In reviewing these JUDGMENTS (though fulminated with the air of one who had the divine Vengeance at his disposal) I find some difference between his and those inflicted by the Apostles.

1. Their terrors fall upon Cheats and Impostors, such as *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; *Elymas* the Sorcerer, and *Simon* the Magician: Whereas the judgments of this new Apostle strike only the members of his own Church, for opposing the tumults of *field-preaching*, and the freaks of, what he calls, THE NEW BIRTH. 2. The Enemies of the infant Church were the Jewish Leaders; and they persecuted in good earnest; yet all these, the Apostles left untouched, and reserved them for a future reckoning. Mr. Wesley's enemies are his own fellow-members, and they persecute in jest; that is, they beat drums, they ring bells, and roar with the rabble; yet these, with unrelenting rage, he *cuts off for troubling him:* while the anger of the holy Apostle, on the like occasion, never rose higher than a passionate wish †. These differences, I leave Mr. Wesley to reconcile. There is another, which, I think, I may be able to account for myself. 3. When the Apostles punished publicly, they as publicly pronounced sentence. Thus to Sapphira, *Behold the feet of them which buried thy husband are at the Door, and shall carry thee out*; to Simon, *Thy money perish* WITH THEE; and to Elymas, *Now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind*—But, in his very important affair, Mr. Wesley appears to have

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 31.

† *I would they were even cut off which trouble you*, Gal. v. 12.

followed a better model, the practice of the INQUISITION; where, though the *Execution* be with all the open pomp of bitter and uncharitable piety, the *Sentence*, it is well known, is ever pronounced *in secret*. In one instance indeed, he varies from his model; and, at Bristol, commences, as we have seen, a regular process against Mr. *Alderman Beecher*; whom he summoneth, to give an account for *lost Souls, at the judgment-seat of Christ:* But whether the Alderman demurred; or whether he excepted to the jurisdiction; or indeed what became of him, after he had been so fairly *cited*, we no where learn.

These are some of the extraordinary Graces of which Mr. J. Wesley assumes the Privileges. But let not this faithful view of them, delivered in his own words, be mistaken for a confutation. My purpose here, is only to shew that he lays claim to them, and so becomes a proper Subject of the APOSTOLIC TEST, by which we are enabled to discriminate all sublunary *Wisdom* from that which is *from above*. And if, on the application now to be made, he cannot bear the *touch*, it will be our fault not to see him for the future, in his genuine FORM of Deluder and Fanatic; which he has been long suspected to have covered with another, namely, the FORM OF GODLINESS.

CHAP. VI.

WE come now to the application of this Sovereign Test, the Scourge and Confusion of Imposture.

This WISDOM FROM ABOVE, of which the Apostle so highly predicates, is, we see, the same as *Wisdom revealed immediately from Heaven*; but, descending to Man, is adapted to the capacity of his Powers. So that *heavenly* and *earthly* wisdom have this common

common, to be COMMUNICABLE, that is, TO BE UNDERSTOOD. For to communicate nonsense, which is a nothing, is no communication. When therefore we find a pretender to inspiration, such as JACOB BEHMEN, delivering to us, under this Character, a heap of unmeaning, or, what amounts to the same thing, unintelligible words, we reasonably conclude, that if indeed, this *Wisdom* did come from above, it hath so degenerated in its way down, as to be ever unfit to return; but must be content, with the other lapsed Entities of celestial original, to seek employment amongst fools and knaves, here below. Nor will the Apology of his illuminated Disciple *, in his book called *The Way to divine Knowledge*, at all mend the matter. "When Jacob, (says he) like Elijah, "in his FIERY CHARIOT, is caught up into such "heights, and sees and relates such things as I cannot "yet comprehend, I love and reverence him for being "where I never was, and seeing such things as he "cannot make me see; just as I love and reverence "St. Paul †," &c. The comparison, we see, is ho-

* Mr. William Law.

† *The way to* DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, &c. p. 88.—Mr. John Wesley, indeed, though no enemy to these superb Vehicles, speaks very disrespectfully of Jacob's *fiery Chariot*: "I can and "must say thus much [of his Mysterium magnum] and that "with as full evidence, as I can say that two and two make four, "it is most sublime nonsense, inimitable bombast, fustian not "to be paralleled." Journal from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743. Another writer, who had the best means of being well informed, assures us, that this *fiery Chariot* was no of Jewish but of German construction. "Jac. Böhmius Sutor Görli- "censis—Hic cum natura ipsa proclivis esset ad res abditas per- "vestigandas, et Rob. Fluddii ac Rosæcrucianorum scita cog- "novisset, Theologiam, *igne duce*, imaginatione comite invenit, "ipsis Pythagoricis numeris et Heraclîti notis obscuriorem—ita "enim Chymicis imaginationibus et tanta verborum confusione "et caligine omnia miscet, ut ipse sibi obstrepere videatur."—J. L. Moshemii Inst. Hist. Eccl. ant. & recent.

nourable; though less apposite than one could wish: For here lies the difference between *Jacob* and *Paul*: the *Rosecrucian* talks largely of what he knew his reader could not understand; and the *Apostle*, as Master of himself, though not of his Subject, more sagely observes a religious silence*. But so will not Mr. *William Law*, who is Master of neither. And who, without the *blessed Jacob's fiery Chariot*, can soar like him to the lunar region of lost intellects; from whence he brings us these curiosities—*a hungry, wrathful, material fire—spiritual materiality*—a mirrour *of sound—wrath turned into Sun and Stars—darkness into Earth*—and *mobility into Air*: And informs us of these secrets, that *life is desire*; that *rage is the cause of hardness in a flint*; *meekness, of fluidity in water*; that *earthly serpents are but transitory outbirths of covetousness, envy, pride and wrath*; and lastly, that *body is only coagulated* or curdled *spirit*: with much more to the same purpose, that would disgrace even Bedlam at full moon.

CHAP. VII.

HAVING shewn this *Wisdom* to be, in its nature, COMMUNICABLE, and so, cut off all the bold pretensions of these MYSTICS, we come to what St. James makes its first and essential quality; *The wisdom from above*, says he, *is* FIRST, PURE; πρῶτον μὲν ἁγνή ἐστιν—i. e. *pure*, both from *carnal* and *spiritual* pollution. Now as Mr. *Wm. Law* begot

* ἄρρητα ῥήματα, ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι. 2 Cor. xii. 4.

METHODISM,

METHODISM *, and Count *Zinzendorf* rocked the Cradle, it may not be improper, first of all, to examine *their* pretensions to this essential quality of heavenly wisdom, *purity*.

As *purity* respects *practice*, those followers of the Count, the MORAVIANS, give us little trouble. For to pass by their open *Hymn-book*, a heap of blasphemous and beastly nonsense; if we may give credit to the yet unconfuted relations both in Print and in MS. (composed by their own Members, the Participants of their most sacred mysteries), their practices in the consummation of marriage, or, as their Ritual calls it, the *Marriage Economy*, are so horribly, so unspeakably flagitious †, that this People seems to have no more pretence to be put into the number of Christian Sects than the TURLUPINS of the thirteenth Century; a vagabond crew of miscreants, who rambled over Italy, France, and Germany, under the title of *Brothers and Sisters of the free Spirit*; who, in speculation, professed that species of Atheism, called *Pantheism*; and in practice, claimed an *exemption* from all the obligations of morality and religion.

The BEHMENISTS, indeed, have not extended the FREEDOM of their *Spirit* to this length; yet the Leader

* "Meeting with Mr. *Law's Christian Perfection and serious Call*—the light flowed in so mightily on my soul, that every thing appeared in a new View," &c. &c. Journ. from Feb. 1, 1737-8, *to his return from Germany*, p. 29.

† Mr. J. Wesley, in a *melancholy account*, which, he says, he received of these Wretches at Bedford, inserts the following particular—"Mr. Rimius has said nothing to what might have been said concerning their MARRIAGE ECONOMY. I know [saith the informer] a hundred times more than he has written. But the particulars are too shocking to relate. I believe no such things were ever practised before, no not amongst the most barbarous Heathens." Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 74.

of the sect, amongst us, though manifesting an exemplary abhorrence of all *carnal impurity*, has fallen into the lowest dregs of the *Spiritual*; and hath written a large discourse to recommend PANTHEISM, a Doctrine so much ennobled by the *Turlupins*, of the thirteenth Century; so learnedly explained by the Cartesian Spinosists, and so politicly concealed by the Chinese Virtuosi: which teaches, that there is but one universal Substance existing, of which, the Creature and Creator (if, after this, they are to be distinguished) participate in common. The general principles of this unhappy Philosophy, the Reader may find in the note below *.

But

* " It is the same impossibility for a thing to be created *out* " *of* nothing, as to be created *by* nothing. It is no more a part " or prerogative of God's omnipotence to create a Being out of " nothing, than to make a thing to be without any one quality of " Being, in it—Every creature is nothing else than NATURE " put into a certain form of existence." *An Appeal to all that doubt or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel.* By W. Law, M. A. 1742, p. 8.

" That which thinks and wills in the soul, is that VERY SAME " unbeginning breath which thought and willed in God, before " it was breathed into the form of a human soul; and therefore " it is, that Will and Thought cannot be bounded.—The essences " of the soul were a breath in God before they became a living " soul, they lived in God before they lived in the created soul; " and therefore the soul is a partaker of the eternity of God, " and can never cease to be." p. 10.

" The creation of a soul is the bringing the powers of thinking " and willing out of their eternal state in the one God, into a " beginning state of self-conscious life, distinct from God. And " this is God's omnipotent creating ability, that he can make " the powers of his own nature become creatural, living personal " images of what he is in himself, in a state of DISTINCT PERSON- " ALITY from him." p. 12.

" It is no more a property of the divine omnipotence to be able " to annihilate a soul, than to be able to make an eternal truth

" become

But next to this *impurity* of fanatic *Wisdom*, which sets NATURE in the throne of GOD, is that other, which separates REASON from GRACE. It is "a "point we CHIEFLY INSIST UPON, (says Mr. J. "Wesley, the pillar and ground of *Methodism*) that "orthodoxy or RIGHT OPINION is, at best, but a very "slender part of Religion, IF ANY PART OF IT AT "ALL*." Here we see REASON is, as it were, discarded from the service of RELIGION, and from its attendance

"become a fiction of yesterday. And to think it a lessening of "the power of God, to say, that he cannot annihilate the soul, is "as absurd as to say, that it is a lessening of the light of the "Sun, if it cannot destroy or darken its own rays of light." p. 17.

"To suppose this or any other MATERIAL world to be made "out of nothing, has all the same absurdities in it as the sup-"posing angels and spirits to be created out of nothing. All the "qualities of all beings are eternal.—All qualities, properties, or "whatever can be affirmed of God, are self-existent and neces-"sarily-existent. Self and necessary existence is not a particular "attribute of God, but is the general nature of every thing that "can be affirmed of God. All qualities and properties are self-"existent in God.—It follows undeniably, that EVERY CREATED "THING MUST HAVE ITS WHOLE NATURE FROM, AND OUT OF, "THE DIVINE NATURE." pp. 23, 24.

"Properly and strictly speaking, nothing CAN BEGIN to be. "The beginning of every thing is nothing more than its beginning "to be in a *new state*.—No quality or power of nature then "began to be; but such qualities and powers as had been from "all eternity began then to be in a *new state*. Ask what fire, "light, darkness, air, water, and earth are; they are and can be "nothing else but some ETERNAL THINGS, BECOME gross, finite, "measurable, divisible and transitory: For if there could be a "temporal fire that did not spring out of eternal fire, then there "might be time that did not come out of eternity." pp. 114, 15.

"Will any one now call these things *whimsical speculations?* "Can any thing be thought of, more WORTHY of God, more "CONFORMABLE to Nature, or more CONSONANT to all revealed "Religion?" p. 118.

* Mr. J. Wesley's *Plain Account*, &c. p. 4.

attendance on GRACE: though one part of the office of the Holy Spirit be *to lead us into all truth.* For when Reason is no longer employed to distinguish between *right* and *wrong* in *Opinions*, Religion hath no further connexion with it. And what occasion for its service when the distinction, we are told, is of so little consequence? And yet if we once agree to *separate* Reason from Religion, *Piety* will soon degenerate into Superstition or Fanaticism. But the Piety of the first ages had a different essence: it was then the glory of the Gospel to be a *reasonable Service.* By this quality it was distinguished from the various modes of Gentile Worship, which entirely consisted in the fanatic Raptures of their Prophets, and the Superstitious Rites of their Priests. Articles of belief, or a formula of Faith, they left to those Innovators who had now pretended to bring in *Reason* for the regulation of Religion; *orthodox or right Opinion being* (on the principles of these antient Masters of the Mob, the supporters of Paganism) *at best but a very slender part of Religion, if any part of it at all.* On the other hand, St. PAUL considered *right Opinion* as a full third part, at least, of Religion; where speaking of the three great supports which the Master-builder, the HOLY SPIRIT, had provided for the Christian-Church, he makes this, of *right opinion*, to be one. *The fruit of the Spirit* (says he) *is in all* GOODNESS *and* RIGHTEOUSNESS *and* TRUTH *. For by *Goodness* † is meant the conduct of Particulars to the Whole; and consists in the exemplary habits of *social* virtue: and this refers to CHRISTIAN PRACTICE. By *righteousness* ‡ is meant the conduct of the Whole to Particulars; and consists in that equal gentleness of Govern-

* Eph. v. 9. † Ἀγαθωσύνη. ‡ Δικαιοσύνη.

ment,

ment, where Church-Authority is made to coincide with the private rights of Conscience; and this refers to CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE. And by *Truth* * is meant the conduct of the Whole and of Particulars to one another, mutually; and consists in *Orthodoxy* or *right Opinion*; and this refers to CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. So different an idea had St. Paul of RELIGION from what this over-zealous man hath been led to entertain of it. No less was the difference, which the first *Reformers* from the errors of Popery, entertained of it; who, for the sake of *right opinion*, occasioned so many revolutions in *Civil* as well as in *spiritual* Systems; the perversity of men turning, as it had before done, the message of *peace* into a *sword* †. How much then had all these to answer for, if *right opinion be at best but a slender part of Religion, if any part of it at all.* Without doubt, Mr. Wesley has, by this declaration, provided well for the fortune of his own Sect, amongst all denominations of Christians. But what obligations the Church of England (of which he professes himself a member) has unto him for thus shortening the labours of the Popish Missionaries, he would do well to consider. Such escapes as these, I suppose, they were, which occasioned the reports of his preaching *Popery* to his Followers; a calumny of which he bitterly complains: and not without reason: for, to do him justice, I believe he has as little regard to the interests of Popery as any of his hearers; and as much to his Own: the truth seems to be this. He could not find a better mean of securing the honour of his own pretensions than by this extraordinary declaration. He saw the exact resemblance there is between

* Ἀλήθεια.

† Matt. x. 34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

his

his Saints and those of the Church of Rome, at the time of the NEW BIRTH. This might lead reflecting men to conclude, that the Original of both was the same. Yet as the Popish and Protestant opinions, or Articles of faith, are very opposite to one another, the God of Truth (while *Truth* was supposed to constitute a principal part of Religion) could never be believed to have any thing to do with the *new birth*, whether Popish or Protestant. Nothing then was left for those who had deserted *Nature*, but to ascribe both to *Enthusiasm* or *Demonianism*. To avoid this disgrace, Mr. Wesley rather chuses to let Popery share with him in the glory of divine communications, and expressly vouches for the Miracles wrought at the tomb of *Abbé Paris* *. Now this concession could be no otherwise supported, than by inculcating the notion, that errors in Faith have so little to do with Religion, that they are no bar or impediment to the highest favours of the Holy Spirit. *It is the point* (says he) *we chiefly insist upon, that Orthodoxy or right opinion is at best but a very slender part of Religion, if any part of it at all.* Great reason likewise had he to INSIST ON THIS POINT, on another account, namely, the Character he hath given of his own Saints. "The "more (says he) I converse with this People, the more "I am amazed. That God had wrought a great work "is manifest. And yet the main of them—are not "able to give a *rational account of the plainest prin-* "*ciples of Religion.*" Nor is this observation confined to the People. He had made a proselyte of Mr. D. vicar of B. And to shew he was no discredit to his Master, he delivers him to us under this Character— "He seemed to stagger at nothing; though as yet his

* Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 23.

"*under-*

" *understanding is not opened* *." He then attempts at the cause of this strange Phænomenon. " It is plain, " God begins his work at the *Heart*; then the inspira- " tion of the Highest giveth *understanding* †." But this solution, though it be in Scripture language, is neither Scripture doctrine nor history. In the first propagation of Religion, God began with the *understanding*; and rational conviction won the *heart*. When the Holy Ghost fell on the Disciples at the day of Pentecost, *the devout men of every nation under heaven* heard them speak in their own tongues. But what? Not the jargon of fanatic movements, but the *wonderful works of God*, i. e. they heard them give a rational account of the various parts of God's religious Dispensations to Mankind. It was just the same on all other occasions: when the Spirit first fell upon Believers, they *prophesied*; that is, they explained the Scriptures of the Prophets. But the dissension amongst the Corinthians set this matter in the clearest light, and shews that the *first* effect of inspiration is to *give understanding*. Their understanding was so inlarged by all spiritual gifts, that the work not having been begun at the *heart*, they abused these advantages to the violation of Charity. But, for this discordancy, between *his* Mission and St. Paul's, he has a salvo: he observes occasionally, in several places of his Journal, " that " God *now* not only does a *new work*, but by *new* " *ways*." This solution of our spiritual Empiric, puts one in mind of the Quack in Moliere, who having placed the *liver* on the left side, and the *heart* on the right, and being told that the structure of the parts was certainly otherwise, replied, " Oui, cela étoit autre fois ainsi; mais nous avons changé tout cela, & nous

* Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 11.

† Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 121.

faisons

faisons maintenant la médecine d'une methode toute nouvelle."—But though he talks of the *understanding* coming after, this is only to put off his *babes of grace* to *latter lammas:* Which he has plainly enough insinuated in a parallel between the WORK carried on in England and in America. "I now (says he) looked "over Mr. Prince's *Christian History*. What an "amazing difference is there in the manner wherein "God has carried on his *work* in England and in "America! *There*, above an hundred of the esta- "blished Clergy, men of age and experience, and of "the greatest note for sense and learning in those "parts, are zealously engaged in the *work*. *Here*, "almost the whole Body of the aged, experienced and "learned clergy, are zealously engaged against it: a "few, but a handful of raw young men, engaged in "it: without name, learning, or EMINENT SENSE! "And yet by that large number of honourable men "the *work* seldom flourished above six months at a "time; and then followed a lamentable and general "decay, before the next revival of it: Whereas that "which God hath wrought by these despised instru- "ments hath continually increased for fifteen years "together *." Now, what is this but to tell us, that the *understanding hath* nothing, and *will have* nothing, to do in the WORK?

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, That that *Wisdom* which divests the Christian Faith of its *Truth*, and the test of this Truth, *Reason*, and resolves all into internal feelings, into mystic spiritualism, and ecstatic raptures, instead of giving it the manly support of MORAL DEMONSTRATION, That this, I say, can never be *the wisdom which is from above*, whose characteristic attribute is *Purity*. Thus, on a fair trial,

* Journ. from July 29, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 43.

these

these illuminated Doctors have, at their very first entrance, excluded themselves from their high pretensions: Principles like these always coming from *Spiritual impurity:* and often leading, as we have seen, into the very sink of the *carnal.*

CHAP. VIII.

BUT now, had it been our good fortune to have found the matter otherwise; and that the *Wisdom* inquired after had rested upon that foundation on which *celestial Wisdom* must necessarily stand (and this it might well do, though it came not immediately from the Fountain-head of Purity; as the *unbroken Cisterns* of Holy Writ were amply sufficient to supply these *living waters)*; our next business would be to prosecute the inquiry, and to apply the other apostolic marks to these pretending Sectaries.

Of these marks, the first only (which has been so amply discussed) namely *purity,* respects the NATURE of the *Wisdom* from above; or, in other words, *the Doctrines* taught. All the rest, which follow, concern the MANNER of teaching, or the Conduct of the Teachers. We are not therefore to stop short in our inquiry, because we may have found that the mark of *purity* has answered to the touch; though Mr. J. Wesley (who assures us that he preaches nothing but the doctrine of the Church of England) thinks this sufficient to satisfy all reasonable men concerning his conduct. "I simply described (says he) the *plain* "*old Religion of the Church of England,* which is "now almost every where spoken against, under the "name of METHODISM *." If *Methodism* be *spoken*

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 90.

against,

against, those who censure it, could mean neither an *old* nor a *new* Religion; since the word signifies only the *manner of propagating* either one or the other. And, of all men, Mr. Wesley should best know the meaning of the term; since it was not a nick-name imposed on the Sect by its enemies, but an appellation of honour assumed by, and bestowed upon, themselves. If therefore they preach only *the plain old Religion of the Church of England*, they could mean nothing, by *Methodism*, but the *manner of preaching* it; for the thing itself needed no other name of distinction than that which it had already. Why then will Mr. J. Wesley so grossly misrepresent his Adversaries as to say, that when they *speak against Methodism*, they *speak against the plain old Doctrine of the Church of England?* since he himself has taught them to call *methodism* (and they might well have called it by a harder name) the *manner*, in which he and his followers attempt to propagate this *plain old Religion.*

However, strip him of his prevarication and his sophistry, and we find him plainly enough declaring, "That the *manner* of preaching, so it be *truth* which "is preached, ought to give no offence." And, to this purpose, he relates the following conversation: "A "serious Clergyman desired to know, In what point "we differed from the Church of England? I answer-"ed, To the best of my knowledge, in none. The "Doctrines we preach are the Doctrines of the Church "of England. Indeed, the fundamental doctrines of "the Church, clearly laid down both in her Prayers, "Articles, and Homilies *."

Be this never so true, yet it will still be as true that the most holy things may be depraved, in passing through impure hands; and that, RIGHT OPINION,

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 81.

which

which inspires wisdom and promotes peace, may then serve for nothing but to turn the heads and hearts of men to folly and dissension, otherwise naturally framed and disposed to profit by the truth. Indeed, a FANATIC MANNER of preaching, though it were the doctrine of an Apostle, may do more harm, to Society at least, than a modest revival of *old* speculative heresies, or, than the invention of *new*; since it tends to bewilder the Reason of some, to inflame the Passions of others; and, in that state of things, to spread disorder and disturbance throughout the whole Community. And in subjection to the Civil Community was the Gospel first preached; and under the protection of it was it, at length, every where established. For, what does FIELD PREACHING (for instance) imply, but a *famine of the Word*, occasioned by a total neglect in the spiritual Pastors appointed by Law? And what can it produce, but strong resentments in behalf of the Ministers of Religion, thus injuriously treated? What can be the issue of the NEW BIRTH, attended with those infernal throes and frightful agitations so graphically described in the Journals of Mr. J. Wesley, but high ferments in behalf of Religion itself, thus scandalously dishonoured and traduced?

The sacred Writer himself, who delivered this TEST for the trial of these Men's pretensions, was unquestionably in these sentiments, "that a *fanatic* Spirit did more mischief in the *mode* of teaching, than an *erroneous* one, in the *matter* taught;" since, of half a dozen marks recommended for this purpose, the first only is applicable to the *doctrine*; all the rest concern the *manners* of the Teacher.

Nay, what is more, we have Mr. J. Wesley himself, for once, on the side of the Apostle, where he says, that *it is a point he chiefly insists upon, that* ORTHODOXY

DOXY *or* RIGHT OPINION *is, at best, but a very slender part of Religion, if any part of it at all.* The Operation of Religion on the heart therefore (which with him is the same as on the fancy, and manifests itself in corporeal agitations) is the principal point. But *this*, altogether resolves itself into the *manner* of propagating the Faith.

Yet still it may be disputed, Who it is that becomes answerable for the disorders occasioned by this *new mode* or *method* of propagating Religion? Is it Mr. J. Wesley, or is it his Adversaries? He, I make no question, will exculpate himself by the direction of St. Paul to Timothy—*to preach the word, in season, and out of season.* Which implies, he thinks, that the *manner* can never be amiss, or made chargeable with blame.

But he would infer more from the Text than it will bear; and misapply it, into the bargain. This direction relates to *time* only, which is but one of the many circumstances attending the *manner of preaching*; and *that one*, in which the abuse is least material. The application (as we say) is no less faulty. The direction is confined to the state of things *then* existing; when the suffering Church had so few opportunities to preach the word, that all, whether *seasonable* or *unseasonable*, were with reason to be laid hold on. When the Church was once established, and *fixed* and *seasonable* times were appointed for holy offices, then (as every one may see) to fly to the *unseasonable* would be factious, and a breach of the discipline of that Church, of which the transgressor professed himself a member. To judge, therefore, of the integrity of Mr. J. Wesley's conduct, we must turn from the directions which St. Paul gives *for his own times*, to those which St. James gives *for all times*

CHAP. IX.

AND this leads us on, in our Inquiry. The Wisdom from above (says this Apostle) *is first pure, then* PEACEABLE.—To be PEACEABLE is a leading quality in its general Character. A Choir of Angels ushered in the Advent of the Son of God, with *peace, good will towards men* *. And He himself, on his departure from us, bequeathed it to us, as his dearest legacy: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you* †. Now that which the FATHER proclaimed, which the SON bestowed, must needs be of the office of the HOLY GHOST to maintain. Whatever *form of godliness*, therefore, hath not this Characteristic mark, can never reasonably be deemed of heavenly extraction.

That the propagation of *Methodism* hath occasioned many and great violations of *peace*, Mr. Wesley hath amply shewn in the journalary history of his Adventures.

But as in all contests between party and party, the blame is reciprocally thrown upon one another; before we come more directly to adjust the share which may be fairly cast upon *Methodism*, it may be useful previously to inquire into that *temper which makes for peace*; for we may be reasonably well assured, that the fault lieth not in that quarter where such a temper is found. Now our blessed Redeemer, who so earnestly recommends *his peace* to us, hath given us directions how to preserve it: *Be ye therefore wise* [φρόνιμοι, PRUDENT] *as Serpents, and harmless as Doves* ‡.

* Luke ii. 14. † John xiv. 27.

‡ Matt. x. 16. So again, *Who is that faithful and wise* [Φρόνιμος, *prudent*] *Servant?* Matt. xxiv. 45.

And he, who gave his Followers no precept, regarding life and manners, which he did not eminently recommend by his own example, was the most perfect pattern of *innocence*, under the direction of PRUDENCE; as appears in his dextrous evasions to captious questions of the Jewish Leaders, who wanted matter to inflame the people against him; in his avoiding the People when thus inflamed; and, above all, in his declining an untimely promulgation of his *Messiah-Character*; which would either have occasioned civil commotions, or have endangered his life before he had completed his Ministry. The first instance of this consummate *prudence* is too important not to be more particularly explained. "There came to him (says "St. Mark) the Chief Priests and Scribes, and the "Elders, and say unto him, By what authority dost "thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? "And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also "ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will "tell you by what authority I do these things. The "baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of Men? "answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, "saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, "Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall "say, Of men; they feared the People: For all "men counted John, that he was a Prophet indeed: "And they answered and said unto Jesus, We can-"not tell. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, "Neither do I tell you, by what authority I do these "things *."

A direct answer to this question, apparently reasonable, and urged by those who had authority to demand it, must have immaturely revealed what the destined Ministry of Jesus made necessary to be kept secret.

* Chap. xi. 27, *& seq.*

And

And yet, to evade the question, in such a manner as was sufficient to satisfy Authority, needed all that divine prudence with which the Author of our Salvation was endowed. He therefore replies, "First, answer me this question concerning John." The question was reasonable, considered in the view of an argument *ad hominem*; it was reasonable, from the force it had in itself: For if it should appear, that that question had not been determined in the case of John, it was evident from their own conduct, that the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim was not violated by any man's declining to answer one of the same import. Further, the question was reasonable and proper in itself. John publicly professed himself the forerunner of Jesus: So that if it were necessary for the Sanhedrim to come at the true knowledge of the general Case, they should have begun with John. This, the natural order of a judicial proceeding required. Nor would the Chief Priests have been backward to answer it, in either view. But here lay the difficulty; the People were of one opinion concerning John, and the Sanhedrim of another. This embarras silenced them. And in our Saviour's taking advantage of that circumstance consists the divine dexterity of his exemplary prudence. *Neither do I tell you* (says he) *by what authority I do these things.* As much as to say, "Both on my principles and on your own, a previous question is first to be resolved, namely, concerning *the baptism of John.* When you have answered this, then comes my time to answer yours: But till then, you have no right to insist upon an answer."—Such instances of Prudence, and so divinely managed, made St. Paul, where in his Epistle to the Ephesians he distinguishes (in the twofold Character of the blessed Jesus) between his office of *Redeemer* from Sin, and *Preacher* of Righteousness,

express his latter office in these emphatic words, *He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and* PRUDENCE*, σοφία καὶ φρονήσει. Which, as appears by what follows, the Apostle makes to consist in his Master's suiting and adapting the various Revelations of his Will to the peculiar seasons and occasions when the knowledge of it was become useful to the furtherance of the Faith. *Having* (says St. Paul) *made known unto us the Mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, &c.* By which the Apostle seems principally to have in mind that obscure and backward intimation, which, for some time, kept hid from his Disciples this *mystery of his will*; the usual title given by the sacred Writers to the calling in of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ. The *prudence* of which conduct is obvious. The Gospel was to be first offered to the Jews. But their reception of it was so unkind, that, had the Apostles been then acquainted with this *Mystery*, they had been tempted to turn to the Gentiles, before the mission to the Jews had been fairly completed. When that was accomplished, the *mystery* was revealed, in all its splendor, to St. Peter.

On the whole, therefore, we see, that THE PEACEFUL CHARACTER IS THAT, WHERE INNOCENCE IS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF PRUDENCE. Emancipated from this direction, *Innocence* becomes a prey both to itself and to others; and is, either actively or passively, the perpetual source of Discord.

Let us see, now, the regard our new Missionaries *profess to pay* to this precept and example of their Master. HUMAN PRUDENCE has, somehow or other,

* Chap. i. 8.

so highly offended Mr. J. Wesley, that he scruples not to call it, the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY and the OFFSPRING OF HELL—"I believe (says he) it pleased "God to bless the first Sermon most, because it gave "most offence, being indeed an open defiance of that "*mystery of iniquity* which the World calls PRU-"DENCE*." As he here informs us, Who gave it that Name, one might be apt to suppose he meant, the *Prudence* of the *unjust Steward*, which is indeed the *mystery of Iniquity*, did not he himself forbid us to understand it in this sense, by fairly telling us that he meant, what the *World* calls CHRISTIAN *Prudence*. And as bad as the *World* is, I think it never qualified the *prudence* of the *unjust Steward* with that attribute. —"God, deliver me, and all that seek him in sin-"cerity, from what the World calls CHRISTIAN PRU-"DENCE†." And again, to a friend who approved not of his *field-preaching*, "—I fear that *offspring* "*of Hell*, worldly or mystic PRUDENCE, hath drawn "you away from the simplicity of the Gospel‡." If his aversion to *Prudence* be thus great, his enmity to those, amongst whom it is usually found, can scarce be thought less, from the hard words he gives whenever he speaks of them—"Mrs. Baddiley (says he) desired "me to go up to her Son, who had been out of order "for some days. For a year or two he was a pattern "to all the family, till he began to converse more "with GOOD SORT OF MEN. He then grew cooler "and cooler in the ways of God, and in a few months "quitted the Society§."—"It is absolutely needful "for such a one as me to follow the wise advice of

* Journ. from Feb. 1, 1737-8, to his return from Germany, p. 12.
† Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 13.
‡ Ibid. pp. 56, 57.
§ Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 31.

" Mr. Herbert. And this, I bless God, I can, in " some measure, do, while I avoid that BANE OF " ALL RELIGION, the Company of GOOD SORT OF " MEN, as they are called, Persons who have a liking " to, but no SENSE of, Religion;" [i. e. no ecstatic feelings or the pains of the *new birth*,. &c.] " But " these insensibly undermine all my resolution, and " steal away what little ZEAL I have *;" i. e. persuade him to be *peaceable.*

And again, speaking of one of his Backsliders, he says—" but indulging himself in HARMLESS COMPANY he first made shipwreck of his ZEAL, and then of his FAITH †." In this I think he is right. The *Zeal* and the *Faith* of a FANATIC are such exact tallies to one another, that I have no conception how either can exist alone. They came into the World together to disturb Society and dishonour Christianity; and they must go out together before the One can regain its peace, or the other its dignity.

On the whole, we find that Mr. J. Wesley is, by his own confession, entirely destitute of that temper *which makes for peace:* If therefore his preaching be attended with tumults and disorders, we cannot but ascribe it to the want of that quality, which the Founders of our holy Religion made essential to the successful propagation of the *Gospel of Peace*, namely, PRUDENCE. It is true, Mr. Wesley, as we have seen, throws the whole fault of these tumults on the DEVIL; and this may be allowed him in the sense that every paltry Pilferer and Sabbath-breaker is used to do. But if we seek for the more immediate

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 31.

† Journ. from his embarking for Georgia, to his return to London, p. 41.

cause,

cause, we shall find it much nearer hand. The Roman Satirist pretended,

—— Nullum Numen abest, si sit PRUDENTIA.

Where PRUDENCE governs, *no God is wanting to keep the world in order.* We may say, with more sobriety and truth, that where IMPRUDENCE takes the lead, there needs no *Devil* to throw it into confusion. What, for instance, more strongly tends to tumult and disorder, than for One who professes to propagate only the *plain old Religion of the Church of England,* to set at nought its established Discipline, by invading the province of the parochial Minister; by assembling in undue places and at unfit times; by *speaking evil of Dignities,* in scurrilous invectives against the Governors and Pastors of the national Church? Insolences of this nature provoke warm and ill-instructed men to demand justice on the offenders: Which not being at hand (as the interests of Society will not, always, permit the Magistrate to enforce it, where the insults on his office are covered with the pretences of Religion), Particulars are but too apt to seek that in a tumultuary and criminal way, which all the providence of Government, and all the equity of Law, are but barely sufficient to adjust, with such discretion, as, that while the dignity of the State is vindicated, the rights of Religion are not infringed.

Nor will that fanatic Apology, which is ever at hand, be any excuse for them in the commission of their disorders; namely, "That the violation *of peace amongst men* serves to advance the *peace of God*; our blessed Master having himself declared, that *he was not come to send Peace on earth, but a sword.*" Now the same Spirit which disposes them to apply to their own case all those declarations concerning the first

first extraordinary state of the Gospel, hinders them from seeing, that these words of Jesus respect only the accidental and transient struggle of the then expiring Powers of darkness; but that the heavenly Proclamation of *peace towards men*, declares the genuine and constant fruits of *God's good-will to* his Creatures: that the *first* only predicted the early fortunes of a suffering Church; and that the *other* described the essential nature, the eternal genius, of an all-beneficent Religion. But Enthusiasts, hurried on by the fervours of an inflamed fancy, lose sight of a Christian land, and a believing Magistrate; and have nothing before their eyes but a Country of Pagans and Idolaters, with the Princes of this world risen up to suppress and persecute the *Word of life*. Under these delusions, it is no wonder that they despise order, insult Government, and set their Rulers at defiance.

But PEACE is the cure of FANATICISM, as *Fanaticism* is the bane of *Peace*. Sectaries must either kick or be kicked. They must either persecute, or they must provoke persecution. To be in this turbulent state, is living in their proper element.

As every *Libertine* aspires to be on the *laughing* side, so every *Zealot* would fain be on the *persecuting*. But Zealots, as well as other Adventurers, must take their chance in this world, whatsoever security they have made for the other. We see METHODISM, at present, under a well-established watchful Government, where it is obliged to wear a less audacious look. To know its true character, and native disposition, we should see it in all its fortunes. And this our own Country, productive of every strange thing, hath given us ample means to contemplate. For They, who now go under the name of METHODISTS,

were, in the days of our Forefathers, called PRECISIANS; terms of their own devising, and (as the fruits of the same spirit) nearly synonymous, importing that the bearers of them had carefully squared out their Religion by line and level. The *elder Methodism*, on its first appearance, put on the same suffering exterior, which we see the younger Brother wear at present. During the firm administration of Elizabeth it disguised, and but barely disguised, its native ferocity, in a feigned submission; after having invited persecution with the air of a persecutor. Those times, we may be sure, would not suffer it to wait long for what it wanted. And then, as a precious Metal, which had undergone its trial in the fire, and left all its dross behind, the Sect, with great propriety, changed its name, from PRECISIAN to PURITAN. But in the weak and distracted times of Charles the First, it ventured to throw off the mask; and, under the name of INDEPENDENT, became the chief Agent of all the dreadful disorders which terminated that unhappy reign. For INDEPENDENCY was a name as well suited to the weakness of that Government, which it defied and overturned, as METHODISM is to the strength of This, of which it stands in awe. Nor is this Pedigree, which makes *Methodism* of the younger House to *Independency*, invented, like heraldic fictions, to ennoble my subject. Whoever reads the large accounts of the *Spiritual state of the Regicides* while under condemnation (written and published, at that time, by their friends, to make them pass, with the People, for Saints and Martyrs), and compares them with the circumstantial Journals of the *Methodists*, will find so exact a conformity in the frenzy of sentiment, and even in the cant of expression, upon the subjects of Faith, Grace, Redemption, Regeneration, Justification,

Justification, &c. as may fully satisfy him, that they are both of the same Stock; and ready, on a return of the like kindly season, to produce the same fruits. All the difference, which distance of times and variety of circumstances have effected, is only this: The *Methodist* is now, an *Apostolic Independent*; and the Independent was then, a *Mahometan Methodist*.

Indeed, it hath been Mr. J. Wesley's mishap, with every other requisite of a skilful Leader, to fall upon times very unpropitious to the fortunes of a new Sect. He found himself in a Government whose equity abhorred Persecution for Religion; and whose firmness, on the other hand, would not suffer its principles of Toleration to be abused, to the disturbance of Society*. Here was little room for the exertion of that quality by which a Sectary may be properly said to exist, namely, ZEAL active or passive. He wanted to be persecuted; but Persecution would not come at his call. Yet, it must be owned, he used every extraordinary method to provoke it: The time was now past, when it could be said of this *Demon*, as of the less mischievous ones of old, "Vocatus, aut non vocatus, audit." The advantages of *persecution* to a new Sect, Mr. J. Wesley is not at all shy in confessing—"About one, I preached at Holton, where "likewise all is now calm, after a violent storm of "several weeks, wherein many were beaten and "wounded, and outraged various ways; *but* NONE "MOVED *from their stedfastness*. In the evening, I "preached at Arnley, *to many who want a storm*, "*being quite* UNNERVED *by constant Sunshine* *." It is the same conscious want which makes him complain of ill treatment; and yet be dissatisfied with good—"We came to St. Ives before morning prayers, and

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 88.

"walked

" walked to Church without so much as one huzza. " How strangely has one year changed the scene in " Cornwall! This is now a peaceable, nay honour- " able station. They give us good words in almost " every place. *What have we done, that the World* " *should be so civil to us*?*"

Is not this the language of a man whom nothing can please, when he is defeated in a secret purpose, which he is ashamed to own? He languished, we see, for good WHOLESOME SEVERITIES. Many (as he well expresses it) *wanted a storm, being quite* UNNERVED *by constant Sunshine.* To supply this want, which the Magistrate so cruelly denied, he is forced to make the best of those mock persecutions, the *Drums* and *Huzzas* of the Rabble. And so bloody always are his ideas, by a constant meditation on this subject, that, speaking of the misnomers of the Grand Jury of Cork, in their presentment of his Brother and half a score more itinerant Preachers, as vagrants and persons of ill fame, &c. he thus expresses himself— " The names (only most of them *miserably mangled and murdered)* were designed for the names of eight Preachers†," &c. The future Martyrologist whom favouring Destiny has appointed to collect together the Saints and Martyrs of this afflicted Church, will, if he be wise, never suffer himself to be misled into a belief that this *mangling and murdering* can refer to *names*; or indeed to any thing less than to an *Irish Massacre*, charitably disguised by our meek Apostle, under a figure, not to say a deformity of Speech. To give these *Persecutions* all the *relief* in his power, he expatiates on every adventure with such circumstance,

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 31.

† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 4.

that

that there is hardly a turnip-top thus sacrilegiously employed, which has not had the honour of being recorded. But this is for Posterity: Something more was to be done for the sake of the *unnerved* Brethren. This small pittance of *persecution*, poor as it is, must be turned to use while time served, lest, like a flame of straw, it should go out as soon as it was put into a blaze. He therefore contrives to keep *persecution* alive by *prosecuting his Persecutors:* And, to make his revenge the sweeter, he does it on the *Toleration Act*; the *Law* which does him so much mischief, in depriving him of a real Persecution. This he notably turns against itself, and makes an Instrument to support and keep up a shadowy Persecution, in the Shouts and Revels of the Mob.

Of this contrivance, and of the success of this contrivance, he has given us many curious examples in his Journals. Abundantly sufficient to evince, that though he who persecutes, breaks the Peace, yet as he is but the tool and Instrument of him who invites and provokes *persecution*, the crime at length comes home to him who set the Rioter on work.

CHAP. X.

THE next mark of celestial Wisdom is, its being GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE INTREATED. That is, neither a rigid reprover of the indifferent manners of others, nor obstinately tenacious of its own: but, as far as Truth and Honesty will permit, compliant and even obsequious to all men. The great Apostle of the Gentiles fully approves his pretensions to this *Wisdom*,

Wisdom, in the account he gives of his conduct, *in becoming all things to all Men, that he might gain some* *. For the truth of which, he appeals to those who were best acquainted with his life and conversation. But amongst our modern Apostles the Scene is shifted. We find them severe condemners of those innocent manners of their fellow-citizens, which they themselves have abstained from, on pretence of their being less profitable and edifying, or, perhaps, obstructive of that perfection which they pretend to aim at. Nor are they less severe exactors of conformity to their own observances.

They tell us what we are to think of them, in the very appellation they assume. For METHODISM (as we have said) implies a set of manners, marked out by the rule and compass; and, when made a name of distinction, it declares those manners are to be religiously and invariably observed, as the sacred badge of the Brotherhood. Hence Mr. J. Wesley in a letter *to the Church of God at Herrnhuth in Upper Lusatia*, having reproved them for teaching, "that it does "imply *Liberty* to conform to the world, by talking "on useless, if not trifling subjects, and by joining in "worldly diversions, *in order to do good*," they justify themselves by saying, "We believe it much better "to discourse out of the newspapers, than to chatter "about holy things to no purpose." To which he replies, "Perhaps so. But what is this to the point? "I believe both one and the other to be useless, and "therefore AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD †." Nay, he pushed this matter so far, as to come to a solemn resolution, NEVER TO LAUGH: and, to guard himself against the approaches of this paltry infirmity,

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 103.

never

never to speak a tittle of worldly things. And certainly, he who carries his dissociability to this extreme, is in no danger of being EASILY INTREATED. He was now fit company only for the Devil (with whom, as we have seen, he had a great deal to transact); indeed, not for him neither, till the more sociable Fiend had a little relaxed his muscles: for the first trick Satan played him, after they grew acquainted, was, as he himself tells us, to make him burst out into an *immoderate fit of Laughter* *. But he was ready *to tear himself to pieces* for his frailty.

Our Apostle's GENTLENESS may, by this time, be easily guessed at. But he saves us the trouble. We learn it fully in his *encaustic Paintings* of his Adversaries. He met with one of these in a violent storm at Sea. Yet the common danger of this dreadful hour could not abate the more violent tempest in his mind—"For who should be there (says he) but the "famous Mr. Gr—— of Carnarvonshire. A clumsy, "overgrown, hardfaced man; whose countenance I "could only compare to that (which I saw in Drury-"Lane, thirty years ago) of one of the *Ruffians in* "*Macbeth* †.——I walked over (says he) to Eg-"ham, where Mr. —— preached one of the most "miserable sermons I ever heard: Stuffed so full of "dull, senseless, improbable lies of those he com-"plimented with the title of false Prophets ‡."—"At "St. Ives we were saluted, as usual, with a Huzza, "and a few stones *or* pieces of dirt:" Yet, for want of a better, he has dignified even this with the name of a *Persecution*. "The *Persecution* here (says he) "was owing in great measure to the indefatigable

* See p. 324 of this Discourse.

† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 31.

‡ Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 88.

"labours

"labours of Mr. *Hoblin* and Mr. *Simmons*; Gentle-
"men worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance
"for their unwearied endeavours to destroy Heresy.

"Fortunati ambo! Siquid mea pagina possit,
"Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo *."

Here he tells us, without disguise, that it is his holy purpose, to gibbet up the *Names* of these his two Persecutors, to everlasting Infamy: while, by the most unregenerate malice in the world, he dips his curses in the gall of irony; and, that they may strike the deeper, fletches them with a profane classical Parody.

Yet this is the man who says,—"God forbid that "I should RAIL, at a Turk, Infidel, or Heretic. I "would point out their Errors, and I trust, in the "SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS †." Yea, *this* SPIRIT was so strong in him, that he blesses God for his goodness, in directing all temptations to fall on this *side*; which, though it may be called his *blind side*, (as he always winks at his injuries; sometimes, indeed, to take the better aim) he assures us, is not his *weak side*—— "I cannot but stand amazed at the goodness of God. "Others are most assaulted on the *weak side* of their "Soul. But with me it is quite otherwise. If I "have any strength at all, IT IS IN FORGIVING IN-"JURIES. And on this very side am I assaulted "more frequently than any other ‡." By which, with uncommon modesty, he would insinuate, that though his *persecutions* abound, yet his *forgiveness, in the Spirit of meekness*, does much more abound.

St. Paul and St. James may be reconciled. But

* Journ. from Oct. 17, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 22.
† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1730, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 112.
‡ Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 39.

he is a bold man who will undertake to reconcile St. Paul and Mr. Wesley. The Reader, perhaps, will be better employed in turning his attention upon *ancient* and *modern* SAINTSHIP, at large: where, in one general view, he will see *God's grace* in the First, and, in the Second, *Man's nature* severally asserting their Rights throughout the whole progress. The genial Spirit of God could breathe nothing but the balm of *gentleness and ease*. The pestilent heat of Fanaticism raises an inflammation and a tumour in the mind, whose Symptoms are an obdurate rigour, and impatience under the probe. The Heaven-struck Heart is affected like the purer metals, which easily soften, and run speedily at the touch of the etherial Ray. But the Fanatic Spirit, self-heated by its own fiery nature, retains the property of its congenial earth, which grows harder and more intractable as it burns.

CHAP. XI.

TO proceed. St. James, in his account of celestial *Wisdom*, advances from grace to grace. It is *peaceable:* this is its lowest quality. It is *Gentle, and easy to be intreated:* this is a further advance in its Character. The first only implies the not giving umbrage or offence to our Brother; but the second declares a readiness to consult his pleasure and convenience. The Apostle's next recommendation of this Wisdom rises still higher: it is, he says, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS. It would have been a poor account of the *Wisdom from above*, that it amounted only to an obsequious *ease* and *gentleness* of Manners: a disposition of heart little more than the shadow or out-

outline of Benevolence, that harmony of the affections, which the Christian Faith calls CHARITY; and which the Apostle, by a beautiful periphrasis, terms, the being *full of mercy and good fruits.*

Let us enquire then into the MERCY and GOOD FRUITS of modern Saintship. The *mercy* of the Sufferer is *forgiveness*; the *mercy* of the Inflicter is *forbearance.*

Of Mr. Wesley's *forgiveness* under sufferings, we have seen many examples in the Language he bestows on his Opposers; who pass with him under no other title than that of the *Devil's Servants* and the *Devil's Children:* of his *forbearance,* when completely armed with the Vengeance of Heaven, we have seen many more, in his dispatching the Principal of these *Children of the Devil,* without mercy, to their *Father.* For one sure mark of the hypochondriac spirit under a Fanatic ferment, is the readiness to dispense, and the rashness to fling about, the exterminating Judgments of God: and when an Enthusiast *calls down fire from Heaven,* the least of his concern is, his being heard. So that every disaster, befallen his Opposers, is considered by him as God's *owning the Cause,* and he would esteem it ingratitude to his Master to give it any other name than that of a JUDGMENT; just as *Witches,* when a mischief happens to those whom they have often cursed, ascribe it to the Avenger of their quarrels, their trusty Coadjutor the Devil. For under the agitations of wrath and revenge, the *fruits of this Spirit* are much the same, whether Heaven or Hell be called to their assistance. Do I wrong these Men? See what has been said above of this matter *: and if that does not suffice, turn again to Mr. J. Wesley's *Journals.* "Wednesday 15. I went to Bedlam at

* Pp. 337—339.

" the repeated request of Mr. S, who had been con-
" fined there above two years. This was the Person,
" who, while he was speaking against my Brother
" and me, to the Society at Kingswood, was in a
" *moment struck raving mad.* But, it seems, *God is at*
" *length intreated for him*, and has restored him to a
" sound mind *." Again, " One J——n H——n,
" a weaver—zealous for the Church, and against Dis-
" senters of every denomination—He laboured much
" to convince his acquaintance that the *strange fits,*
" *into which people at the Societies fell,* was a delu-
" sion of the Devil. We were going home when one
" met us in the street, and informed us, That J——n
" H——n was fallen *raving mad.*—Between one and
" two, I came in and found him on the floor, the
" room being full of people, whom his wife would
" have kept out, but he cried aloud, No, let the
" world see the *just Judgment of God.* Two or three
" men were holding him as well as they could. He
" immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and stretching
" out his hands, cried, Oh! this is he who, I said,
" was a deceiver of the People. But *God has*
" *overtaken me* †."—And again,—" I was informed
" of an *awful providence.* A poor wretch who was
" here the last week, cursing, blaspheming, and la-
" bouring with all his might to hinder the *word of*
" *God,* had afterwards boasted to many, that he would
" come again on *Sunday,* and no man should stop
" his mouth then. But on Friday *God laid his hand*
" upon him, and on Sunday he was buried ‡.—I saw
" a poor man, (*once joined with us*) who wanted
" nothing in this world, but the peace the world

* Journ. from Oct. 27, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 33.
† Journ. from Aug 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 44.
‡ Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, pp. 59, 60.

" cannot

" cannot give. A day or two before, *he hanged him-*
" *self*, but was cut down before he was dead. He
" has been crying out ever since, *God had left him,*
" *because he had left the Children of God**." But
he is inexorable to all who apostatize—" I buried
" the body of Lucy Godshall—after pressing toward
" the mark for more than two years—*She became*
" *weary and faint—I put her out of the band*—God
" blessed this to her soul."—But how?—" She fell
" down on her knees, and delivered up her soul and
" body into the hands of God. In the instant, the
" use of all her limbs was taken away, and she was
" in a burning fever.—She cried out on *Satan*—was
" in *darkness*—was in *light*—closed her eyes and
" died †."—" I was pressed to visit Nicholas Palmer,
" one who had *separated from us*, and behaved with
" a great *bitterness*, till *God laid his hand* upon him.
" He had sent for me several times, saying he could
" not die in peace till he had seen me.—We wrestled
" with God in his behalf—His soul was comforted;
" and a few hours after quietly fell asleep ‡."

Their GOOD FRUITS come next to be considered. Mr. J. Wesley's idea of *true Religion* doth not promise much. He saith, " It doth not consist in any or all
" these three things, *the living harmless—using the*
" *means of Grace—and doing much good.* A man,
" he says, may do all this, and yet have *no true Reli-*
" *gion at all* §."

Yet St. JAMES talks another language. *Pure Religion* (and, I suppose, *pure* and *true* differ only in sound) *and undefiled before God and the Father, is*

* Journ. from Oct. 27, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 91.
† Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 71.
‡ Ibid. p. 5.
§ Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 11, 12.

this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World *.

Now, what is *visiting the fatherless and widows*, but *the doing much good?* And what is *keeping one's self unspotted from the world*, but *using the means of Grace?* In what a fearful taking, then, must Mr. Wesley's Zealots be, who, misled by the Bible, have so long mistaken *true Religion?* The least it will do is to drive them to *despair*. But this is the very state in which their Master delights to take them up. And his assurance, that *true Religion* consists *in God's dwelling and reigning in the Soul* †, soon makes way for a happier madness: the Jaws of Hell begin to close, the Gates of Heaven to open.—But, what the over-laboured imagination suffered, during the course of this operation, requires the hand of a Master to describe. I shall give it therefore in Mr. J. Wesley's own words: and as these his spiritual cures (which he reports with the exactness of an Hippocrates or a Sydenham) are all the GOOD FRUITS he pretends to, he will not be displeased to have a few of the choicest of them set in a fair light.

The condition of his audience, on his first operation upon them, is thus graphically described—"I preached "in an open place, two or three miles from Newcastle. "The wind was high and extremely sharp: but I saw "none go away till I went. Yet I observed none "seemed to be much convinced; only STUNN'D, AS "IF CUT IN THE HEAD ‡." This was in order. They were first to be *stunned*; the Watchman, Reason, was to be laid asleep before he could set fire to their Imaginations. But he brings them to their senses with a vengeance, the vengeance of the Devil. "I

* James i. 27. † P. 11. ut sup.

‡ Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 82.

"felt

"felt the FIRE OF HELL already kindled in my breast "(says one), and all my body was in as much pain "as if I had been in a burning fiery furnace *."—"I "was interrupted (says he) by the cries of one who "was *pricked at the heart.*" One of those, I suppose, who had before been *cut in the head:* and having now got possession both of the *head* and *heart*, the game begins—"Another person dropped down—a "little boy near him was seized in the same manner. "A young man who stood behind fixed his eyes on him, "and sunk down himself as one dead. But soon "began to roar out and beat himself on the ground, "so that six men could scarcely hold him.—Mean-"while many others began to cry out to the Saviour "of all, that he would come and help them, insomuch "that all the house, and indeed all the street for some "space, was in an uproar.—I was called after supper "to one, who, feeling in herself such a Conviction as "she had never known before, had run out of the "Society in all haste, *that she might not expose her-"self.* But the hand of God followed her still †," &c. This fear of *exposing herself*, Mr. J. Wesley, we see, takes much amiss. He speaks with some resentment, but more contempt, of her delicacy. Yet it seems hard that he would not suffer the young Woman to understand the nature of *her own feelings*, and consequently to be the best judge of the danger she was in, of *exposing herself*.—"Forty or Fifty of those who "were seeking salvation, desired leave to spend the "night together in the society room. Before ten, I "left them, and laid down."—For our Engineer had so amply provided them with combustibles, and so fitly laid his train, that he knew they would take fire

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 83.

† Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, pp. 50, 51.

from their own collisions. He was not disappointed—
"Between two and three in the morning he was
"awaked, and desired to come down stairs. I imme-
"diately (says he) heard such a confused noise, as if
"a number of men were all putting to the Sword.
"It increased, when I came into the room, and began
"to pray *," &c.—"Thence I went to a poor woman
"who had been long in *despair*. I was glad to meet
"with Mrs. R. there; the person mentioned in Mr.
"Whitefield's Journal, who after *three* years *madness*
"(so CALLED) was so deeply convinced of Sin †," &c.
—"Another of Dr. Monro's patients came to desire
"my advice; I found no reason to believe she had
"been otherwise *mad* than every one is, who is deeply
"convinced of Sin ‡."—"A middle aged woman de-
"sired me to return thanks for her to God; who, as
"many witnesses then present testified, was, a day or
"two before, really *distracted*, and, as such, *tied down*
"*in her bed*. But upon prayer made for her, she was
"instantly relieved, and restored to a sound mind §."
—"*I could not but be under some concern* with regard
"to one or two persons, who were tormented in an
"unaccountable manner, and seemed to be indeed
"*Lunatics*, as well as sore vexed ‖." Here, for the first time, Humanity seems to have recovered a little of its rights, amidst these scenes of horror. Mr. J. WESLEY himself confesses, *he could not but be under some concern*. But invigorated by the *new Man*, he soon shakes off the *human pity* of the *old*, and makes a joke even of the very *Lunacy*, he had pretended to lament. "Two or three who were at the Devauden (a high
"hill two or three miles from Chepstow) *are gone*

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, pp. 51, 52.
† Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 8.
‡ Ibid. p. 83. § Ibid. p. 4. ‖ Ibid. p. 88.

"*quite*

" *quite distracted,* i. e. they mourn and refuse to be " comforted till they have Redemption *," &c.—" I " desired one who had seen affliction herself to go and " visit Mrs. G—— in *Bedlam* (put there by her hus- " band as a *mad woman),* where it pleased God " greatly to knit their hearts together, and with his " comforts to refresh their souls †."—" Amongst the " hearers was one, who some time before had been " deeply convinced of her ungodliness, insomuch that " she cried out day and night, *Lord, save, or I perish!* " All the neighbours agreeing that she was *stark mad,* " her husband put her into a Physician's hands, who " blooded her largely, and laid on several blisters. " But all this proving without success, she was in a " short time judged to be *incurable.* When Mrs. " Johnson came, she soon saw the nature of the dis- " ease, having herself *gone through* the same. She " ordered all the medicines to be thrown away, and " exhorted the Patient to *look unto Jesus* ‡."

And with this spiritual *madness* he is so enamoured, that he calls it, when at its height, A GLORIOUS TIME. " I preached at Weavers Hall. IT WAS A GLORIOUS " TIME. Several dropped to the ground, as if struck " with lightning §," &c. &c. And where this is want- ing, though every other thing be to his wish, he is so dissatisfied, that it is as much as ever his submission to the divine Will can obtain of him, *to let God do as seemeth him good.*—" I saw none of that *triumph of* " *Faith,* which has been so COMMON in other places. " But the Believers go on *calm and steady.*—LET GOD " DO AS SEEMETH HIM GOOD ‖."

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 90.
† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 54.
‡ Journ. from Sept. 3. 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 53.
§ Ibid. p. 27. ‖ Ibid. p. 78.

But

But though Mr. J. Wesley does so ably, in this new Trade of *turning fools into mad-men*, yet his Craft's-master is certainly one Mr. Wh—y, of whom Mr. Wesley tells this extraordinary tale. "A poor woman "gave an account of what I think ought never to be "forgotten." Truly, I think so too—"It was four "years, she said, since her Son, Peter Shaw, then "nineteen or twenty years old, by hearing a Sermon "of Mr. Wh—y, fell into great uneasiness. She "thought he was ill, and would have sent for a Phy-"sician. But he said, No, no, send for Mr. Wh—y. "He was sent for, and came; and, after asking a few "questions, told her, *The Boy is mad*, get a Coach "and carry him to Dr. M——, *use my name, I have "sent several such to him* *."—Who this Mr. Wh—y is, or what he is, I know not. But, we see, he sends his People to Monro, with the same unconcern in search of lost brains, that one would enquire of Sir J. Fielding for a lost portmanteau.

Such are the exploits which Mr. J. Wesley calls, in the place last quoted, BLESSINGS FROM GOD: and which therefore we may well call the GOOD FRUITS of his Ministry; those by which St. James directs us to judge of his *Mission*. For what the Apostle calls *good fruits*, namely, *doing much good*, Mr. J. Wesley plainly tells us, belong not to *true Religion*: What belongs not to true Religion, he rightly deems superfluous: And whatever is superfluous, he makes solemn resolutions to avoid †.

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1759, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 56.

† Journ from Feb. 1, 1737-8, to his return from Germany, p. 13.

CHAP. XII.

HITHERTO the Marks delivered by St. James, to judge of a pretended Missionary from Heaven, consider him as urging his pretensions fairly and with good faith; though possibly in a fanatic or enthusiastic way: But what follows—WITHOUT PARTIALITY AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY—represents the pretender to such a character as capable of acting in a mask, and using the mere worldly arts of fraud and deceit. And this supposition is made with admirable judgment and knowledge of human Nature.

ENTHUSIASM, so indispensable a requisite in the successful leading of a Sect, must always be accompanied with craft and knavery. There is a necessity for this odd combination; and the thing itself, as strange as it may seem, is very naturally to be accounted for.

A meer cool-headed Projector, without any tincture of innate enthusiasm, can never succeed in his Designs, because such a one can never exhibit those surprising freaks, which a heated imagination, working on a *disordered*, though, for this purpose, *fitly framed* temper of body, so speciously produces. For the spirits of the People, who are to be taken in, can never be allured, but by raising their *admiration*, and keeping up their confidence in an inspired Leader. Besides, new doctrines and new ideas are never so readily received as when the Teacher of them is in earnest, and believes *Himself*: For then there is something so natural in his conduct as easily to conciliate belief; there is something so alluring, that it acts even like an Incantation.

On the other hand, a *mere Enthusiast*, who, by virtue

virtue of this faculty, hath gone so far in his purpose as to raise the admiration, and to captivate the spirits, of the People, must here begin to fail, if he be without the other quality, *sectarian Craft*: For, his *fanaticism* not being under the controul of his *judgment*, he will want the proper dexterity to apply the different views, tempers, and pursuits of the People, now inflamed and ready to become his Instruments, to the advancement of his Projects.

But when these two talents of *Fraud* and *Fanaticism* unite to furnish out the Leader of a Sect, great will be the success of his undertakings. And when such a one feels the strength of this union, it is no wonder he should be ready to cry out with Mr. J. Wesley, *Give me whereon to stand, and I will shake the whole earth**. For now the sallies of his Enthusiasm will be so corrected by his Cunning, as to strengthen and confirm his supernatural pretences; and the cold and slow advances of a too cautious policy will be warmed and pushed forward by the force of his *Fanaticism*. *His craft* will enable him to elude the enquiries and objections of the more Rational; and his Visions will irrecoverably subdue all the warmer Noddles. In a word, they will mutually support and strengthen each other's force, and cover and repair each other's defects. St. Jerom seems to have had a true idea of this extraordinary combination, when he said, "Nullus potest "Hæresin struere, nisi qui ARDENTIS INGENII est, "et habet DONA NATURÆ†." Which may be thus paraphrased—*No Heretic will ever be able to raise a Sect, but he, in whose constitution Nature has enabled Fraud and Fanaticism to act in concert.*

Several things concur to facilitate this happy con-

* See p. 329 of this Discourse.

† See Div. Leg. Book III. § 6.

junction,

junction. An Enthusiast considers himself as an Instrument employed by Providence to attain some great End, for the sake of which he was sent out. This makes him diligent in his work; impatient under any lett or obstruction; and attentive to every method for removing it. Persuaded of the necessity of the End, and of the divine Commission intrusted to the Instrument, he begins to fancy that such a one, for the obtaining so great a purpose, is dispensed with, in breaking, nay is authorized to break, the common Laws of Morality; which, in the cant of those times, when Fanaticism had its full play, was called the BEING ABOVE ORDINANCES. In the first application of these *means*, the People are the Dupes of their Leader: But the success being frequently far beyond even his own conception, he becomes, in his turn, the Dupe of himself; and begins in good earnest to believe that the trick which he played them, was indeed not of his own contrivance, but the inspired instigation of Heaven *. This will explain an obscure passage of Tacitus, where speaking of this sort of Character, in his oracular way, he says, FINGUNT SIMUL CREDUNTQUE. Let me add, that this seems to have been much the case of OLIVER CROMWELL, from his first mounting into the Saddle and the Pulpit, to his last reveries on his death-bed †.

Again,

* That great observer of Nature, CERVANTES, having made Sancho (to save himself from the vexation of a sleeveless errand) palm upon his Master a supposititious Dulcinea; When the Squire comes to relate this adventure to the Duchess, she extols his ingenuity so highly, that he begins to suspect himself to be tricked into his own contrivance; and that the Inchanters had presented him with a *true* Dulcinea in masquerade, when he thought he was imposing a *false one* barefaced on his Master.

† Thurloe tells us, that the Protector, on his death-bed, foretold his recovery, as an inspiration from Heaven. Had it proved

true,

Again, *Enthüsiasm* is a kind of ebullition or critical ferment of the mind, which a vigorous nature sometimes works through, and by slow degrees is able to surmount. Hence the most successful Impostors, who have set out in all the blaze of Fanaticism, have completed their Schemes amidst the cool depths and stillness of Politics. Though this, in some degree, be common to them all, yet I know of none who exemplifies the case so fully as the famous IGNATIUS LOIOLA. This wonderful Person began his *ecstasies* in the mire, and finished his course in the direction and execution of Councils, which, even in his own life-time, were ready to give Law to Christendom. Mr. J. Wesley appears to have studied this great Master well: though, by a common practice of those who set up for themselves, he kicks away the steps by which he mounted. "I rode (says he) to Oxford "—in riding, I read over that surprising book, the Life "of IGNATIUS LOIOLA. Surely one of the greatest "men that ever was engaged in the support of a *bad* "*cause. I wonder any man should judge him to be an* "*Enthusiast.* No: but he knew the people with "whom he had to do. And setting out like Count Z. "with a FULL PERSUASION *that he might* USE GUILE "TO PROMOTE THE GLORY OF GOD*." Now I desire to know, how any, but an ENTHUSIAST, could have a *full persuasion*, i. e. be persuaded, bona fide, *that he might use guile to promote the glory of God?* Or how any, but a KNAVE, could succeed in this *persuasion?*—Cicero observes that the *Eye*, which sees all other things, sees not itself; This instance will shew it

true, he had gained much by obtaining to himself the useful Character of Prophet: and he lost nothing by the conviction of its falsehood.

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743; p. 67.

it to be equally true, that the *Mind*, which plays such strange tricks, is often very inattentive to its own frame and operations.

Modern Saintship then being so subject to these odd traverses, it is well for BOTH SOCIETIES, that we have an unerring Rule whereon to estimate its Claim. For the Apostle having declared that *the wisdom from above is without* PARTIALITY *and without* HYPOCRISY; if such qualities be found in those who pretend to derive all immediately, from *above*, we need no further evidence of the imposture. And, now, having hitherto used this famed Head of his Sect for an Example, it would be unkind to drop him here, and not suffer him to finish, as he began, his Apostolical career.

PARTIALITY consists in dispensing an *unequal measure*, in our transactions with Others:

And HYPOCRISY in attempting to cover that *unequal measure* by prevarication and false colours.

The Reader must have been very inattentive to what hath been produced from Mr. J. Wesley's JOURNALS, not to have observed the many convincing marks of the writer's *partiality* and *hypocrisy*. The passages have indeed been given to convict him of other *fanatic qualities*, equally inconsistent with the *wisdom which is from above*; but many of them will, at the same time, serve to shew how ably he availed himself of these two political Accomplishments.

We have seen in general, that his Followers are always the *Children of God*; and his Opposers, the *Children of the Devil*. But the first being directed by inward feelings and the impulse of an inflamed fancy, and the other by the outward testimony of Scripture, interpreted by human reason, it is no great wonder that Mr. J. Wesley, who saw them so much unlike,

unlike, should marshal them under two different Leaders. But what shall we think, when we find him saying the worst of his Friends that his Enemies have said of him, as soon as ever he sees them presume to play over his own pranks in any other Name? If they follow not him, they are *Fanatics* and *Enthusiasts*, how like soever they be in all other things to their ghostly Pattern.—"I was with two persons "(says Mr. J. Wesley) who, I doubt, are properly "*Enthusiasts*. For first they think to attain the end "without the means, which is *enthusiasm*, properly "so called: again they think themselves inspired by "God, *and are not*. But false imaginary inspiration "is *enthusiasm*. That theirs is only imaginary in-"spiration appears hence, it contradicts *the Law and* "*the Testimony**." These are wise words: but what do they amount to? Only to this, That these two Persons would not take out their Patents of Inspiration from his Office; and, therefore, he has advertised them, for Counterfeits. However, thus much we gain by them, that all modern pretences to Inspiration are, by the acknowledgment of Mr. J. Wesley himself, to be tryed by the *Law and the Testimony*. He cannot, then, surely, refuse to have his own pretensions tried before that Judicature to which we have appealed him.

Miss Gr—, one of the holy, had told another Miss, that Mr. J. Wesley was a *Papist*, perhaps on account of the honour he does to *auricular confession*, one kind of which he recommends to his BANDS. Upon this Miss Gr— is anathematized. And we are told, that, in consequence, "she had lately been "*raving mad*; that as such, she was tied down in

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1 1739 p. 23.

"her

" her bed *." Yet all these circumstances of *madness* have, in the opinion of the ablest Physicians, befallen Mr. J. Wesley's favourite Saints; whom he has vindicated from that Opprobrium; he has laughed at the ignorance of the faculty; and declared those equivocal marks to be the constant Symptoms of the NEW BIRTH.

He pronounces Sentence of *Enthusiasm* upon another: And tells us, Wherefore, without any disguise. —" Here (says he) I *took leave* of a poor, mad, " *original Enthusiast*, who had been scattering abroad " LIES in every quarter †." By which we find, that, even in Mr. J. Wesley's own opinion, *Fanaticism* and *Knavery* are very near neighbours.

" I had much conversation with Mr. Simpson, an " *original Enthusiast*.—I desired him in the evening " to give an exhortation—He did so, and spoke *many* " *good things, in a manner peculiar to himself*. When " he had done, I summed up what he had said, " methodizing and explaining it. O what pity is it " that this well-meaning man should ever speak with- " out an Interpreter ‡!"—and that Mr. J. Wesley should not be he!

In these two last passages, we are presented with two ORIGINAL ENTHUSIASTS. But how differently do we find them treated! The first is accused of doing the work of the Devil, of spreading *lies* of his Master; on which account his Master *takes his leave of him*: a gentle expression, to signify, the thrusting him out, head and shoulders, from the Society of Saints: The other likewise, whose *original enthusiasm* is made to consist only in want of *Method*, or, to speak more

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, pp. 73, 74.
† Journ. from Oct. 27, 1743, to Nov. 17, 1746, p. 71.
‡ Ibid. p. 91.

properly, want of *Methodism*, is only lamented, as having the ill luck to *speak without an Interpreter*. That is, without having his doctrine regulated on the dictates of his Master. But the First set his Master at defiance: the Second *spoke many good things*, that is, he professed a doctrine agreeable to Mr. Wesley; indeed, *in a manner peculiar to himself*, that is, not on Mr. Wesley's Authority, but his own. Now, there were some hopes of Him; but none at all of the other. Therefore though they are pronounced ORIGINAL ENTHUSIASTS alike, yet we must distinguish, and rate their Titles very differently. The first *Original* was of his original the Devil, *a scatterer abroad of lies in every quarter*: The second was worth recovering. His *Original Enthusiasm* was a foundation, like *Original Sin*, to erect upon it a monument of Grace.

But the most *genuine instance of enthusiasm*, which, he tells us, he will give, and which, without doubt, he does give, with the utmost reluctance, is the following. He preached at *Tanfield-Leigh*. "But so "dead, *senseless*, unaffected a congregation (says he), "have I scarce seen, except at *Wickham*. Whether "Gospel or Law, or English or Greek, seemed all "one to them." Yet he *spoke*, he tells us, *strong rough words*. But why is *want of sense* put into this *rough* description of their unregenerate State? He owns, that numbers of the Godly were without any. And why would he elicite *sense* from these Gentiles, when, upon their conversion, they were finally to be deprived of it, in *ecstacies* and *new births*? However, as ungrateful as the Soil appeared,—"Yet the seed "sown even there was not quite lost. For on Thurs-"day morning, between four and five, *John Brown*, "then of *Tanfield-Leigh*, was *waked out of sleep* by

" the voice that raiseth the dead; and ever since he " has been full of love and peace and joy in the Holy " Ghost." But now see what comes of *waking these sleepers.* This same J— B—, who had received the Holy Ghost but at the latter end of November, became so *freakish* by the beginning of December, that he even forced Mr. J. Wesley (for the honour of Methodism itself) to pronounce *him* likewise a *genuine Enthusiast,* and to throw aside this precious Saint, as flawed by over-baking, amongst the useless rubbish of his Shop.

" I was both surprised and grieved"—here, Reader, thou mayest safely believe him—" at a *genuine* in- " stance of *Enthusiasm.* J— B— of Tanfield-Leigh, " who had received a SENSE of the love of God a " few days before, came riding through the town, " *hollowing* and *shouting*" [the inseparable symptoms of the *new birth*] " and driving all the People before " him, telling them, *God had told him he should be a* " KING, *and should tread all his enemies under his* " *feet* *."

Now this being the only FRUIT of the *seed sown* in this place, had it not been better to have let these honest people alone? who appear amiable, even through the sarcastic abuse he so liberally pours over them.— " At Wickham, I spoke strong rough words: but I " did not perceive that any regarded what was spoken. " The People indeed were exceeding quiet, and *the* " *cold kept them from falling asleep*; till, before two, " I left them very *well satisfied with the Preacher* " *and with themselves* †." And why should they not! Why is this poor satisfaction, in themselves, which they had so liberally expressed towards him, be grud-

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 79.

† Ibid. p. 78.

them? A reasonable Man desires no more, than that his friends be satisfied with him; he does not expect, nay, he would be sorry, to find them dissatisfied with themselves. But such an equality of mind and measure, as in the good people of Wickham, is destructive of all the schemes of a Fanatic Leader: Who must find, or *make*, a People desperate, and ready to hang themselves, before they can be prepared and rightly tempered for the sacred Mold of Methodism.

We shall end, where every Fanatic Leader ends—with his HYPOCRISY. And if *evasion* and *prevarication*, in the most essential points of his Ministry, may be called by that name, I cannot see how Mr. J. Wesley will escape from having this concluding mark of imposture fixed upon him.

I. We have wearied ourselves and Readers, in recounting the numberless MIRACLES by which He and his affairs have been supported, amidst a *cloud of Witnesses* well disposed to magnify the scene. Yet, after all this, with a WORLDLY PRUDENCE which one would not expect in a man who calls it *the mystery of Iniquity*, he thinks fit to secure himself a retreat, in case all these wonders should become problematical. For after having heaped them upon one another, Olympus-high, throughout nine copious Journals, he sneaks away under the cover of a puny Wonder, and leaves the defence of all his Giant-miracles in the lurch! "About five (says he) I began, near the Keel-"man's Hospital, many thousands standing round, or "sitting on the Grass. The wind was high just be-"fore; but scarce a breath was felt, all the time we "assembled before God. I praise God for this also. "IS IT ENTHUSIASM TO SEE GOD IN EVERY "BENEFIT

"BENEFIT *which we receive**?" Certainly it is not. The *Enthusiasm* consists in believing those *benefits* to be *miraculously* conferred by a change in the established order of Nature. This is the *Enthusiasm* with which he is charged; and this Charge almost every page of his Journals will support. But here, by the neatest address, he covertly insinuates (as a Word to the Wise) that he meant no more by his *Miracles* than the *seeing of God in every benefit we receive.* A certain Philosopher † of great name fancied he had explained the nature of vision well, on the principle of *seeing all things in God.* And if the World be content to be paid in such coin, our Divine will not be long in its debt. He can explain *Miracles,* as well as the other explained *Nature,* by the knack he has of *seeing God in all things.* This then goes a great way towards ridding his hands of Miracles when the Inquisitive become troublesome. But as he well knew it might be said of him, "If you part with your Miracles, you strip yourself of the credentials of your Mission," he has a fetch for this also; a Friend to help him at a dead lift; whose opinion, "he wishes "all calm and impartial men would consider—Not "to establish the power of *working Miracles* as the "great Criterion of a divine Mission; when Scripture "*teaches us that the agreement of doctrines with* "*truth as taught in those Scriptures,* is the only in-"fallible Rule ‡." Suppose now any sense could be drawn out of these gallimatias of *Scripture's teaching that the agreement of doctrines with truth as taught in those Scriptures, is the only infallible rule:* And that it might mean, "that Scripture teaches us, that

* Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 18.

† Malebranche.

‡ Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 72.

the conformity of its doctrines with the truths discoverable by natural light, is the only Criterion." I then ask, Where SCRIPTURE teacheth this? I ask it, I say, Because REASON teacheth another thing: for, from the Premisses, of the *conformity of Scripture doctrines with truth*, Her Conclusion is only this, That Scripture doctrines are true; not that they were immediately derived from Heaven. I am *afraid* therefore, that *Scripture* is here much scandalized, by making it talk a language so dissonant to *Reason*. And I am the more confirmed in this opinion, since Scripture, from the mouth of Jesus himself, expressly says, that the *power of working miracles*, and not *the conformity of Scripture doctrines to truth*, is the great *criterion of a divine Mission*. The words of Jesus are these: "If I had not done amongst them the "works which no other man did, they had not had "Sin: But now have they both seen and hated me "and my Father *." But why, in case *no miracles had been worked* amongst them, *had they not had Sin?* For this reason, and only for this, that, without *Miracles*, there was *no sufficient criterion* of a DIVINE MISSION. And *Sin* could not be imputed to them for rejecting a Character which did not bring its full credentials with it. From what I can see, then, Mr. J. Wesley must either stick to his *Miracles*, or give up his *Mission*.

II. But he shifts and doubles no less with regard to the *Ecstacies*, and the *New-birth* of his Saints. Sometimes they are undoubtedly of *God*; sometimes again as certainly of the *Devil*: but he is constant in this, that *Natural causes* have no hand in them. The reason is plain: He could make both GOD and the

* John xv. 24.

DEVIL

DEVIL conducive to his purposes; but NATURE is the sure destruction of every fanatic frolic.—The Saints met in Fetter-lane to humble themselves before God for *grieving the Holy Spirit*.—To the several offences assigned, Mr. J. Wesley adds—" But above " all, by BLASPHEMING HIS WORKS amongst us, " imputing it either to NATURE, to the force of ima- " gination and animal Spirits, or even the *delusion of* " *the* DEVIL.—At that hour we found GOD with us " as at the first. *Some fell prostrate upon the ground.* " *Others burst out, as with one consent, into a loud* " *praise and thanksgiving*. And many openly testified, " there had been *no such day as this*, since January " the first, preceding *."—" On Friday many were " deeply convinced; but none were delivered from " that painful conviction. The Children came to the " *birth*; but there was not strength to bring forth. " *I fear we have grieved the Spirit of the jealous* " *God by questioning his work* †."

—" Innumerable cautions were given me, not to " regard *Visions* or *Dreams*, or to fancy people had " remission of Sins, because of their *Cries*, or tears, " or outward professions.—The Sum of my answer " was as follows: You deny that God does now work " these effects: at least that he works them in this " manner. I AFFIRM BOTH: because I have heard " these things with my own ears, and seen them with " my own eyes. I have seen very many persons " changed in a moment from the Spirit of fear, horror, " despair, to the Spirit of love, joy, and peace.—" " What I have to say touching *Visions* or *Dreams* is " this: I know several persons in whom this great " change was wrought in a *dream*, or during a *strong*

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 59.

† Ibid. p. 16.

"*representation to the eye of the mind*, of Christ, "either on the Cross or in Glory. This is the fact *." —Nay, he is so convinced of its being the *work* of God, that the horrid *blasphemies* which ensued, he ascribes to the abundance of joy, which God had given to a poor mad woman of his flock. "I met with one, "who having been lifted up with the abundance of "joy which God had given her, had fallen into blas- "phemies and vain imaginations *as are not common* "*to men*. In the afternoon I found another instance, "nearly, I fear, of the same kind—She had her *pri-* "*vate revelations* so called †," &c. But now, on a sudden, he gives us the reverse of the Medal, and directly revokes all he had advanced—"I told "them they were not to judge of the Spirit whereby "any one spoke, either by *appearances* or by *common* "*report*, or by their own *inward feelings*. No, nor "by any *Dreams, Visions*, or Revelations supposed "to be made to their soul, any more than by their "tears, or any *involuntary effects wrought upon* "*their bodies*. I warned them, all these were in "themselves of a DOUBTFUL DISPUTABLE NATURE. "They *might* be from GOD, or they *might* not ‡." The Reader cannot but be much surprised to find so formal a recantation of what he had said § just above concerning *inward feelings, dreams, visions*, and *ecstacies*; and of his own *confidence* in affirming these to be the work of God, from his *having both heard these things with his own ears, and from his having seen them with his own eyes*; for here he denies *common report*, (and are not other people's *ears* and *eyes* as

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 49.
† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 54.
‡ Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, pp. 60, 61.
§ See p. 391.

good

good as his?) or *appearances*, or even *feelings*, to be a sufficient ground of assurance: of this, I can give no better account, and perhaps the Reader will desire no better, than this, that when our Apostle thought fit thus to unsay what he had so confidently affirmed before, it was in a desponding hour, when he *was in much doubt whether God would not lay him aside and send other Labourers into his harvest* *. Under these fears he seemed resolved, at least, that these new *Labourers* should not reap what he had sown: and therefore, at all adventures, thought proper to cut the ground from under their feet.

At length, finding his Cause sufficiently disgraced by the unruliness of these *divine Agitations*; and knowing (as we shall see presently) how to make a better use of them; he fairly gives them all to the DEVIL. "I enquired (says he) into the case of those "who had, almost every night the last week, *cried* "*out aloud*, during the preaching. I found that all "of them were persons in perfect health, and had "not been subject to Fits of any kind till they were "thus affected: that this had come upon every one "of them in a moment, without any previous notice, "while they were either hearing the word of God, or "thinking on what they had heard: that in that mo-"ment they dropt down, lost all their strength, and "were seized with violent pain. This they expressed "in different manners. Some said, they felt just as "if a sword was running through them: others, that "they thought a great weight lay upon them, as if "it would squeeze them into the Earth. Some said "they were quite choked, so that they could not "breathe; others, that their hearts swelled ready to "burst: and others, that it was as if their Heart, as

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov 1, 1739. p. 60.

"if

" if all their Inside, as if their whole Body was tearing " all to pieces. These *Symptoms* I can no more " impute to any NATURAL CAUSE than to the SPIRIT " OF GOD. I can make no doubt but it was SATAN " TEARING THEM as they were coming to Christ. " And hence proceeded those *grievous cries* whereby " he might design both to DISCREDIT the Work of " God, and to affright fearful People from hearing " that Word, whereby their souls might be saved *."

Now, the Reader ought to take notice, that these were the very *Symptoms* which Mr. J. Wesley had before ascribed to the *Spirit of God.*—But by this time he was sensible, and so he confesses in this very place, that they had DISCREDITED the *Work.* They were therefore to be sent to the DEVIL, from whence they came; yet still upon Mr. J. Wesley's Errand. For there is nothing, except NATURE, as we observed above, which he cannot put to some good use or other. And this new Donation of the *ecstacies of the Saints* was a noble foundation for what he was now projecting, the Farce of DIABOLISMS and EXORCISMS. Well, therefore, might he exult over this Old Mischief-maker, *as not having wit enough to discern* that he was over-matched; and that Mr. John Wesley was too hard for him. *I wonder* (says he) *the Devil has not wisdom enough to discern that he is destroying his own Kingdom* †. Indeed, he has fairly turned the tables upon SATAN: and shewn us, that he can make full as good an use of a POSSESSION from below ‡, as of an INSPIRATION from above.

III. The Reader remembers how contemptuously Mr. Wesley has spoken of *Orthodoxy,* or *true belief*;

* Journ. from Sept. 3, 1741, to Oct. 27, 1743, p. 91.

† Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept 3, 1741, p. 56.

‡ See pp. 334—336.

even

even to the questioning whether it makes *any part of Religion at all*; certain is he, that, at best, it makes *but a very slender part*. "It is a point, says he, we "chiefly insist upon, that Orthodoxy, or right Opinion, "is at best but a very slender part of Religion, if any "part of it at all *." This was done to *take in* as many as he could, from amongst the *Sectaries*; but when he wants to *take off* as many as he can, from amongst the *Churchmen*, then *Orthodoxy*, or true belief, is like *Methodism*, the *Unum Necessarium:* or, to speak more properly, *Orthodoxy* and *Methodism* are but two words for the same thing. "About a "thousand people stood patiently while I simply de- "scribed the *plain old Religion of the Church of* "*England*, which is now almost every where spoken "against, under the new name of *Methodism* †."

IV. We have seen him (in the true spirit of a Sectary) inviting and even provoking *Persecution*, as the only means of making the *good seed take root:* for, after having sown it in the mud and slime of *field preaching*, he then, by a kind of Ægyptian Husbandry ‡, draws together whole droves of obscene Animals, who rush furiously in, and trample it about; but this, as that Mother-seat of Arts may have informed him, only made it spring up the better.——"The Mob, says he, "gathered in great numbers about my door, and quite "closed me in. *I rejoiced and blessed God, knowing* "*this was the time I had long been looking for* §." But, mistake him not. A *Persecution* he certainly wished,

* Mr. Wesley's plain Account, &c. p. 4.

† Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 90.

‡ ——in suum quisque rus ejacto semine, Sues immittit, et satis conculcato a Suibus semine, messem deinde expectat. Herod. l. ii. c. 14.

§ Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 56.

and

and as diligently sought. But it was for his beloved Saints, who, as he says, wanted it *; who hungered after it; not for himself, who had no stomach to it, especially when it grew serious, as once upon a time it did.

In his ramble to *Georgia*, he got acquainted with one Mrs. Williamson (so he himself tells his story), to whom he refused the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. She had done some *wrong*, it seems, *to her neighbour*. What it was, he does not tell us. The Uncle (he says) desired he would declare in the Court-house, why he expelled Mrs. Williamson from the holy Communion, but he declined it, as apprehending *many ill consequences* might arise from so doing. What He would not declare, the Uncle did; and said, that it was *in revenge for rejecting his*, Mr. Wesley's, *proposals of marriage, and marrying Mr. Williamson*. The Husband prosecuted him for *defamation:* and the Wife, says Mr. Wesley, "swore and signed an affidavit, *insinuating* "*much more than it asserted*, but asserting, that he, "Mr. Wesley, had many times proposed marriage to "her, all which proposals she had rejected."

In consequence of this, "He is presented by the "*Grand Jury*, upon oath, as having broken the Laws "of the Realm by speaking and writing to Mrs. "Williamson against her husband's consent; by re-"pelling her from the holy Communion," &c. The matter was now growing serious; the Georgians, he found, did not understand raillery, in the affair of spiritual Gallantry. It was time for him to look about him. In this distress, he began to have recourse, as usual, to his *revelations*—"I consulted my friends, "*whether God did not call me* to return to England. "The reason for which I left it had now no force, there

* See p. 364.

"being

"being no possibility, as yet, of instructing the In-
"dians: neither had I, as yet, found or heard of any
"Indians on the continent of America, who had the
"least desire of being instructed.——After deeply con-
"sidering these things; *they were unanimous that I*
"*ought to go; but not yet.*" However, the Magistrate quickened his pace. He was declared *an Enemy to, and Hinderer of, the public peace.*—"I
"again (says he) consulted my friends, who agreed
"with me, *that the time we looked for was now come.*"
The Reader, who has seen him so long *languish for persecution*, will conclude, he was now preparing to meet it with the constancy of a Martyr. No such matter. He was preparing for his flight. But to hide his poltronery in a bravado, he gave public notice of his Apostolical intention. On which the Magistrates ordered that he should first find security to appear, when summoned, to answer the Charge brought against him. But he refusing, they published a Placart, "re-
"quiring all the Officers and Sentinels to prevent his
"going out of the Province; and forbidding any per-
"sons to assist him in so doing." Things were now come to a crisis: and Mr. J. Wesley, on the whole, thought it best to retreat without beat of drum; and to steal a march upon the Enemy.—"I saw clearly
"(says he) the hour was come for leaving this place.
"And as soon as *Evening Prayer* was over, [for
"Prayer must always make a part in his Stratagems],
"about *eight o'clock*, the tide then serving, *I shook off*
"*the dust of my feet* *." A very pleasant way, truly, of acting the *Apostle*. But if he made the path easy for himself, he took care to render it doubly perplexed for his Followers. He left, we see, his *little Flock* in

* Journ. from his embarking for Georgia, to his return to London, pp. 46—56.

the

the lurch, to answer, as they could, for the crimes objected to their runaway Pastor.

But had his *longings for persecution* been *without Hypocrisy*, he had here the fairest occasion of honestly indulging himself to the full. He had gone as far as *Georgia* for it. The truth of his Mission was brought in question by the Magistrate, and decried by the People; not so much for his false doctrines, as his *false morals*. The honour of the Gospel was wounded through the sides of its pretended Missionary. There was but one way to support its credit, the way the first Christian Preachers always took, the offering up themselves for the Truth they preached, and for the Integrity they professed. Instead of this, our paltry Mimic thinks he had discharged an Apostolic office, when he applied to himself an Apostolic phrase,—*I shook off the dust of my feet*, says he; much easier done than shaking off his infamy. Jesus, indeed, orders his Followers to *shake off the dust of their feet*, where the inhabitants would not receive their Doctrine, that they might not throw away their time in vain: but he never directed it as a Trial-ordeal of innocence when they were accused of immoralities, and the honour of the Mission concerned. When Paul and Silas had been imprisoned, and otherwise evil intreated at Philippi, neither the *Miracle* nor the *Magistrate* (when each, in their turn, had set open the Prison doors) could persuade them to stir a step till they had procured all honourable satisfaction to their injured Characters *. But what do I speak of the cases, in which the *prudence*, recommended by our great Master, directs his Disciples to *avoid*, or the *courage*, with which he inspires and enables them to *dare*, the rage of PERSECUTION? We are now on the detection of a

* Acts xvi.

HYPO-

HYPOCRITE, who expressed his longings for *persecution*; who invited it, who provoked it, in a Country where the Magistrate restrained and forbad it; and yet ran away from it when his own honour, as well as that of his *little flock*, should have induced him to oppose himself to it; and where the Magistrate, by his own account, was forward enough and ready to oblige him. But he ran away, like a Coward, on the wings of *Prayer* and the *Tide*: henceforth, the hatred of this unhospitable Shore, and the horror of the entertainment there prepared for him, made such an impression on his temper and his fancy, that he lets slip no occasion of revenge. For when the good man was got back to Europe, and even forced to beat it on the hoof as far as Hernhuth, in Germany, before he could get into a *Land of Christians* *, he overtook, as he tells us, in a little village on the road, "a large number of *Swit-*"*zers*, Men, Women, and Children, singing, dancing, "and making merry, being all going to make their "fortunes in GEORGIA. *Looking upon them* (says he) "AS BEING DELIVERED INTO MY HANDS BY GOD, "I plainly told them, what manner of place it was. "If they now leap into the Fire with open eyes, their "*blood is on their own head* †." It would be hard to guess how he came to *look upon these Switzers as delivered into his hands by God*, unless he believed, God was bound to revenge all his squabbles with the young Wenches of his *Bands*, (which, by his Journals, we find were not a few) and that therefore *God prepared*

* "At Weymar, we came before I know not what great man "(I believe the Duke) who, after many questions, asked, what "we were going so far as *Hernhuth* for? I answered, to SEE THE "PLACE WHERE THE CHRISTIANS LIVE. He looked hard, and let "us go." Journ. from Feb. 1, 1737-8, to his return from Germany, p. 45.

† Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 6.

these

these Switzers for the Instruments of his Vengeance. He made a proper use of them; he *opened their eyes*; and so, in all likelihood, deprived a British Colony of many useful hands.

V. We have seen above, how he set *worldly prudence*, *Christian prudence*, and, in a word, every thing which bears the name of PRUDENCE, at defiance; denouncing it to be the *Bane of Religion*, and the *Instrument of the Devil*. This was but necessary to inflame the *madness* of his Followers. But a very different language is required when the *ambition* of his RIVALS is to be restrained. Then PRUDENCE is the very balm of Gilead, the assuager of hurt Minds, and the great restorative of sickening Peace.

But we should take the affair from its beginning. So early as in the year thirty-nine, he began to suspect, that he should have RIVALS in his Apostolic office.—"I came into my old Room at Oxford, from which I "went to Georgia. Here, musing on the things that "were past, *and remembering how many that came* "*after me were preferred before me*, I opened my "Testament *," &c. For you must know, Reader, that, of all the *Superstitions* (and they were not a few) which struggled for Dominion with *fanaticism* in the Microcosm of this holy Man, the SORTES SANCTORUM were the Chief; a species of Divination to which, St. Austin tells us, the good Christians of his time had recourse, rather than consult the Devil, like their Pagan Neighbours. To this favourite folly, our Missionary refers all his doubts. It is his Urim and Thummim; and he applies it as freely and irreverently to his occasions, as a Village Conjurer does his *Sieve* and *Sheers*. At this time, indeed, it afforded him but

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, pp. 14, 15.

small

small relief. He sunk so far in his despondency, *as to doubt whether God would not lay him aside, and send other labourers into his harvest* *. We soon see what it was that gave him these cruel twitches: a *Rival*, and he no small One, the famed Mr. WHITEFIELD; who now began to set up for himself; and, indeed, as much the madder of the two, to ingross the favour of the Rabble. While the Rivalship continued on a tolerable footing, Mr. J. Wesley contented himself with, now and then, giving his *beloved in Christ* a sly wipe of contempt, as occasion presented; and under the saintly symbol of *praising God for him.*—"I read "prayers, and Mr. *Whitefield* preached. How wise is "God in giving *different talents* to different Preachers! "even the *little improprieties both of his language and* "*manner*, were a means of profiting many who would "not have been touched by a *more correct discourse*, or "a *more calm and regular* manner of speaking †." This, we see, was full in his teeth; and by a side-wind came up to that *Master-Preacher*, who is insinuated to be more correct, and calm, and graceful, in his Pulpit-Manners. Notwithstanding this, Mr. *Whitefield* went on triumphantly; and being ambitious to advance himself on the necks of his Fellows, taught FAITH ALONE; and offered FREE GRACE to a People little disposed to purchase it. Mr. J. Wesley was an Advocate for WORKS: but he must do them himself, if he expected any good from them, in this Contention. For an equivalent, therefore, to Mr. Whitefield's *spiritual Graces*, He, like another Moses, dispensed his *temporal Blessings*. Particularly, in the ART of Healing; for he would trust no longer to the GIFT, full as his Journals are of his *miraculous Cures*. It was now, he

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 60.

† Journ. from July 20, 1749, to Oct. 30, 1751, p. 24.

found, high time to set up a *regular Practice*. Accordingly, he told his People how deeply read he was in Medicine, which he had studied at Oxford. And to prove himself no Quack, he published a whole book of Receipts or Remedies for all the common Distempers of life. At the same time, he let the better Sort understand, he was well skilled in the *medicina Mentis*. He had given innumerable flirts of contempt, in his Journals, against HUMAN LEARNING: and, indeed, of what use could Learning be in a Religion like that which he propagated? In which, as he assures us, *Orthodoxy or right belief made a very slender part, if any part at all.* Yet when now he had to struggle with a Rival *pro aris & focis*, no means were to be left untried to secure his Dominion. He therefore plainly enough informs them, that he was ready to teach, in a better and more expeditious way than was hitherto known, even to the UNIVERSITIES, two eminent parts of this decried Learning, namely, *Rhetoric* and *Ethics*. "This week (says he) I read over "with some young men a Compendium of *Rhetoric*, "and a System of *Ethics*. I see not why a man of "tolerable understanding may not learn, in six months "time, more of *solid Philosophy* than is learned at "Oxford in four (perhaps seven) years *." Did ever JESUIT play his part better? Yet even this would not do. FREE GRACE bore down all before it; and Mr. Wesley was at last forced, as in a desperate case, to have recourse to that paltry quack remedy, which he had so much scorned and execrated, I mean PRUDENCE.—"I believed (says he) both love and justice "required that I should speak my sentiments freely "to Mr. Wh—— concerning the Letter he had pub-"lished, said to be *in answer to my sermon on free*

* Journ. from Nov. 25, 1746, to July 20, 1750, p. 14.

"*Grace*.

"*Grace.* The sum of what I observed to him was "this: 1. That it was quite IMPRUDENT to publish "it at all, as being only *the putting of weapons into* "*their hands, who love neither the one nor the other.* "2. That if he was constrained *to bear his testimony,* "AS HE TERMED IT, against the error I was in, "he might have done it by publishing a treatise on "this head without ever calling my name in question." —Here our Journalist can treat with scorn that very cant in which himself so much abounds, the applying Scripture phrases to the impertinence of modern occurrences.—"However (adds Mr. Wesley) he had "said enough—to make an open (and probably irre-"parable) breach between him and me: seeing, *for* "*a treacherous Wound and for the* BEWRAYING OF "SECRETS *every friend will depart* *."

Without doubt, the Reader will be curious to know what these *Secrets* were, which had been so ill kept between these two *Free Masons.* But the purpose of this Discourse is not to prejudice the Readers against this extraordinary Man, from anecdotes on tradition, or from *secrets bewrayed*; but to enable them to form a judgment of his pretences, from what he himself has openly recorded of himself, and frequently repeated to the World. What I would have them observe on the last quoted passage, is only this, that Mr. J. Wesley, after so total an estrangement from WORLDLY PRUDENCE, has, at length, in his distresses, been forced to take shelter with her. And for his first visit, it must be owned, he acquits himself very well after so long an absence.—The Letter Mr. Whitefield had written should not have been published, as "*it* "*was putting Weapons into the hands of the common* "*Enemy.*"—It should not have have been published,

* Journal from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, p. 78.

as it tended to a *Schism* in the Society.—If he must needs publish it, "*he should not have called Mr. "Wesley's name in question,*" as this tended to a breach between these two fast friends.—And if he (Mr. Wesley) should never consent to have this breach closed, he was justified in PRUDENCE, since the *Wise man* says, *from a treacherous wound and bewraying secrets every friend will depart*; which he understands to signify, *every friend ought to depart.* Indeed, the Reader may object, that there was one expedient of PRUDENCE left untried, which was, the *meeting his quondam friend half way.* Mr. Wesley was no enemy to this use of PRUDENCE, as we shall see presently. But Mr. Whitefield was too formidable a Rival with whom to compromise, or even to yield an inch. A less considerable Opposer might be managed this way, without danger; and then his PRUDENCE directs him to pursue it.—"I laboured (says he) to convince Mr. "G—— that he had *not done well in confuting* (as he "termed it) the Sermon I had preached the Sunday "before. But he was absolutely above conviction *." —Would not *prudence* now have justified him in leaving a man *above conviction*, to the error of his own ways? Surely a less consummate *prudence* than Mr. J. Wesley's would have done so. But he will not leave Mr. G—— so unkindly. "I then asked (says "he), *Will you meet me half way?* I will never *preach* "*publicly* against you. Will not you against me? "But he disclaimed any such agreement."—When PRUDENCE would have advised him not to *preach publicly* against the Body of that Clergy to which, he says, he belongs, then is PRUDENCE the *bane of Religion*, the *mystery of Iniquity*, and the Whore of Babylon herself. But when she prompts him to tempt

* Journ. from July 20, 1750, to Oct. 28, 1754, p. 81.

a Bro-

a Brother of the same trade to *meet half way*, and not to *preach publicly* against him, then is PRUDENCE of heavenly birth, and sent for the assistance of the Saints: at present, indeed, honestly employed in the charitable errand of inviting Mr. G—— to play the *Hypocrite* with him: for he declares Mr. G—— to be *absolutely above conviction*; that is, in conscience unable to stir a step; which, too, was his own case: yet, in the same breath, he proposes *to meet him half way*. But Mr. G—— approved himself the honester man. From all this we have reason to conclude, that Mr. J. Wesley, amidst his warmest exclamations against *Worldly* PRUDENCE, against *Christian* PRUDENCE, and against PRUDENCE of every denomination, had it still in petto to employ a succedaneum, on a pressing occasion: which he, indeed, calls PRUDENCE; but which, to save the credit of his consistency, he had better have let go under its true name of CRAFT.

Thus have I endeavoured to tear off the Mask from the furious and deformed visage of Fanaticism and Seduction. The power of Religion hath enabled me: and the interests of Religion have excited me to this attempt; nothing so much discrediting the *Doctrine of* GRACE as these counterfeit impressions of the Spirit of God. For, since the descent of the Holy Ghost was no longer in *the rushing mighty wind*, but in *the still small voice*, licentious men have been but too apt to conclude, either that GRACE was an imaginary Power; or at most, that it was no other than that assistance which the divine attribute of *Goodness*, as discoverable by natural light, was always ready to impart to distressed and helpless Mortals; just as they would persuade themselves that REDEMPTION is nothing else than that restoration to God's favour, which

his mercy, discoverable too by the same light, prepares and lays open to repentant Sinners.

The Reader, in conclusion, will take notice, that the order I have here followed, is that which is best adapted to shorten the controversy, and to cut off all chicane and evasion.

1. I have singled out the Founder and Leader of the Sect, that no one may have pretence to say, that what, He is here shewn to teach and practise, is not true and genuine METHODISM.

2. I have confined my remarks to his own adventures, recorded by his own pen, and here fairly quoted in his own words; that no one may have pretence to say, I have foolishly confided in false or uncertain reports: or unjustly made the Sect answerable for the indiscretions and absurdities of every obscure FIELD-PREACHER.

3. I have taken the Methodists at their word, when they call themselves members of the Church of England, that I might not run the hazard of confounding both the Reader and myself with long and blind scholastic disputations on *original Sin*, *irresistible Grace*, and *justifying Faith*; on *Regeneration*, *Election*, *Reprobation*, and *the immerit of good Works*. To their MODE of teaching, and not to the *things* taught, I confine my discourse. Of *that*, every reader can judge; and of *that*, he has a sure rule to judge by, the MARKS delivered by the holy Apostle St. James of the *Wisdom which is from above*: MARKS, which (for weighty reasons already explained) refer mostly to the *mode* of teaching; and which, if not found in this new *mode* of methodist-teaching, are sufficient to convict it of imposture.

THE

DOCTRINE OF GRACE;

OR,

THE OFFICE AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

I NOW turn, for what remains of this Discourse, to those sober Ministers of the Established Church, who hold themselves bound to obey its DISCIPLINE as well as to profess its DOCTRINES.

If any good use can be made of what has been already said, it will be chiefly promoted by these Reverend Men, who, in honour of the Church which they serve, and in gratitude to the State by which they are protected, will make it their first care to support that most just of all Public Laws, the Law of TOLERATION: which, how long soever obstructed in its passage to us, and how late soever arrived amongst us, is certainly of DIVINE ORIGINAL. Nor will such Men ever venture to *refine* upon it (which will always be to *weaken* it) by idle distinctions between the *letter* and the *spirit* of the Law. For between these, in well-composed Laws, there is no difference; the *letter* being no other than the language and expression of

the *spirit*. Indeed, one would wonder, they should ever have been opposed, did we not know how ready *Superstition* has always been to support the interests of bad Policy, in vitiating both the intellects and the morals of Mankind. God once gave a *preparatory Religion* to a select People, under the name of LAW, by which the future dispensation was half-revealed and half-hidden. In such a *Law* the *letter* and the *spirit* were necessarily different. A difference, which the Ministers to whom the propagation of this future Religion has been intrusted, have been much accustomed to inculcate. Hence Superstition, in this, as in many other cases of the Jewish Law ill understood, very absurdly applied that distinction, to Civil Laws and compacts; where the full meaning was instant, and should be obvious; and where, as far as there was any real difference, so far were these Laws of defective Composition.

The Friend of *Toleration* therefore will not, I say, make any distinction, or contend for any difference, between the *letter* and the *spirit* of this Sovereign Law of Nature. This mischievous employment will be the task of him who regards it but as a temporary expedient, forced upon us, to prevent greater evils. And as, amongst the friends of *Toleration*, the English Clergy, seduced by a common error, were not amongst the first to give it a cordial reception, it seems incumbent on their Successors (who were however amongst the first to detect that *common error*), to obliterate the memory of the old prejudices of their Order, by the warmest patronage and support of what their more reasonable principles now so much approve.

Their friendly attachment to this Law will be best seen by their regarding it, first, as doing honour, in a *spiritual*

a *spiritual view*, to a CHRISTIAN CHURCH; implying confidence in the truth of its constitution, and that it will receive no detriment by a comparison with any other, how near or close soever they may be set together.

And secondly, as bestowing benefit, in an *ecclesiastical view*, on the NATIONAL CHURCH; it being a certain Maxim, that an *Established Religion*, under a *Toleration* and a *Test*, will always go on enlarging its bounds; since the restraint which this latter Law imposes, is so light, that it is considered rather as a small inconvenience than an injury; a burthen so easy as not to exasperate, but barely to excite in men a disposition to remove it.

In a word, the CHURCH in which religious liberty is cordially entertained and zealously supported, may be truly called CHRISTIAN: for if *the mark of the beast* * be PERSECUTION, as the sacred volumes decipher it; well may we put TOLERATION as the *seal of the living God* †. This then is our present boast.

True philosophy, so lately cultivated, and now happily made subservient to the Truths of Religion, hath rectified many of those Doctrines which the still-misapplied aid of the *false* had deformed. Nor should the HIERARCHY (much honoured of late in the happy recovery of its ancient Ornaments, the Prelates of high birth and noble lineage) be denied the praise, so justly due, for its share in this reform. To men of Family, we are taught, by experience, to ascribe an innate generosity of mind, which inclines them to whatever is polite and decent in *private* life; and, in *public*, disposes them to support the rights of humanity and society. They are reckoned to be the low-born and Cell-bred *number*, in whose minds

* Revel. xvi. 2. † Revel. vii. 2.

Bigotry

Bigotry and bitter Zeal are apt to get root and overspread. So that the Church may promise to itself great advantages from the genial lustre which this fair Accession to the sacred College is now deriving to it. DECUS ET TUTAMEN, is the motto inscribed on every Prelate's mitre; most certain to be read in every Prelate's breast. The *first* shines naturally out in the birth and manners of every noble Dignitary; the *latter*, his solemn engagements will make him studious to discharge.

But this great Work will not be done by Talents at large, but by that sort of Talents only, which is suited to its sacred nature. Every Order and Station in Society hath its appropriated and proper *tone*; where a consent in one common key makes that harmony which gives perfection to the Whole. It should be the care therefore of every Member of that Whole, to fit his manners and accomplishments to the natural *tone* of the Body which he honours, or by which he may think himself honoured. This is so true, that manners and accomplishments, foreign to the Profession, nay, though in general estimation of a superior kind, yet, when thus preposterously introduced, destroy all that concord which maintains its *dignity* and *use*.

On this occasion, hear an old Grecian Tale. A musician at Athens became famous for a sacred Lyre, descending to him, through a long race of Ancestors, from the first Heroes and Demi-gods of Attica. Its Tone was so ravishing, and the skill of the Master, in calling it out, so delicate and profound, that the Artist and his Lyre were always called upon to bear a principal part in the high Solemnities of that religious City. It happened, that in the midst of one of these Celebrations, a chord of the Lyre broke. It was strung in the ordinary manner with nerves, or what our musical

musical neighbours call, *corde de boyau*. But the enamoured Owner, to do all honour to so rare a wonder, unadvisedly supplied the broken string with one of SILVER. The consequence proved fatal. The Lyre lost all its harmony and sweetness: it grew harsh and discordant. The People abhorred what before they had dwelt upon with raptures; and the unhappy Lyre, now the public execration, was hung up, a neglected thing, a silent monument of the folly of the too-fond Possessor.

Nor should the great Body of the *Clergy* be forgotten on this occasion; They who have approved themselves no way *inferior* in an honest zeal for the support of Christian Liberty. If any stale particles of the *old leaven* still remain, they lie perfectly inactive. A new Start-up Sect, indeed, will be apt to put them into a momentary ferment: and, on such an occasion, they will be eager to expose their evil nature.

Thus, the first appearance of METHODISM began to heat and irritate the mistaken Zeal of some ill-instructed men, against a new species of Fanaticism, which pretended to be of the Church, and yet insolently affronted its *discipline*; disdaining to shelter itself under the peaceable shade of a legal Toleration: For these men, in their hearts, were enemies to this Law, as fanatic Sects generally are; who contend for religious Liberty, not because they would obey conscience, but because they, an' please you, are the Advocates of Truth; *Liberty*, as well as *Dominion*, being, in their opinion, founded in GRACE. This, indeed, was a trying occasion. But had those good men considered that the *Methodists* provoked the Public patience merely to procure to themselves a *mock persecution*; for to more (as they very well knew)

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it could never amount in a State where the *honour* of the national Religion was secured by a *Toleration*, and the *safety* of it, by a *Test*; had they considered this, I say, they would have left these factious men to their own inventions.

Besides, a fairer opportunity never offered itself, to do the Clergy credit. Had we appeared easy only with those who had qualified themselves to claim a legal Toleration, our acquiescence might have been imputed to our impotency in contending with it. But by bearing patiently with *Methodism*, the Clergy might have shewn the World, that the *Toleration-Act* had their hearts, as well as their outward obedience; for this Sect professed to be of the Church, and yet, at the same time, dared to insult its Discipline, and set its Governors at defiance; practices which no equitable indulgence would skreen from punishment. This was the time for the Clergy to vindicate their character from the calumnies of their enemies; and in general they wisely laid hold on it: So that now they can be no longer suspected of malevolence to the *Law of Toleration*, when in a case where they were free from its influence, they yet bore with temper, and though provoked by insolent defiance, connived at the behaviour of a Sect of Fanatics, over whom all Laws, divine and human, had given them jurisdiction.

But then, if we shew ourselves thus rightly disposed in favour of this divine principle of Toleration, where the Law hath left offenders against Church Government to the justice of its Rulers; much more disposed shall we be to suffer the honest Sectary, who hath legally qualified himself for the enjoyment of his religious liberty, to possess it without trouble or control.

When the Law of *Toleration* had once recognized this universal Right, it soon became apparent, that

that

that other Law of prior date, the TEST (for the formation of *civil* Systems does not always, like the *natural*, begin at the right end) was now, by securing the Rights of the national Church, become more necessary than ever for the peace of the State. For, by this Law, Sectaries were restrained from the exercise of certain *civil Offices*, which some men have been pleased to call *natural Rights:* and we will not dispute with them about a word, for to no more does it amount, since it is confessed that Society could never have been formed without men's giving up some of their *natural rights*, in order to secure the peaceable enjoyment of the rest.

But it may so happen, by the Custom or Constitution of *Corporate Bodies*, that the conditional restraint which the *Test* imposeth, shall, by accident, become a benefit or advantage; as when a Sectarian member of a Corporation is appointed by his Body to discharge a very important though very onerous Office; and yet not permitted by the State to enter on it, but on conditions which his religious principles will not suffer him to comply with. For it having been, a long time, the custom for the Member, when nominated to this Office, to purchase, of the Body, an exemption, at a large price, called a *Fine:* when this came to be demanded of a dissenting Member, he naturally replied, that it could not equitably regard any but Such who *willingly* declined a permitted Office; certainly, not Those whom the *Law* had forbidden, by severe penalties, to discharge it. But to this so plausible a plea, it was thought a sufficient answer, "That the Law, of whose restraint the dissenting Member would thus avail himself, was never intended for his advantage or emolument."

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The question therefore to be decided was this, "Whether he who *cannot* serve is equally obnoxious "to the Fine, with him who *will not?*" and, to this day, it remains undetermined *.

Now I humbly conceive, this question can never be rightly resolved, till the *true nature* of the TEST LAW be previously settled; and when that is done, it will, I suppose, be no longer disputable.

Were this Law enacted to draw, or to drive, Dissenters into the National Church, the prohibition, of serving Civil Offices, was certainly intended for a PUNISHMENT. If the Law were enacted only to keep Dissenters out of those Stations, in which, by hurting the Church, they would violate the peace of the State, it was as certainly intended for a RESTRAINT, only; and becomes a *punishment* but by accident.

Now were it intended for a PUNISHMENT, the *Fine* is most just and equitable: And then the reasoning of the Body against the Member, "That the Legisla-"ture, by this Law, never intended the Dissenter "should receive Civil benefit and advantage," will not be without its force; For a *benefit* defeats the end of the Law.

But if the Test impose a RESTRAINT only, and it become a *punishment* but by *accident*, it may, without the least evil influence on the Law, become a *benefit* likewise by *accident*. Nay, to hinder this fair Chance would be highly unjust. For if, from the inevitable condition of human things, Particulars receive *damage* by a Law which respects the General, and which never had such damage in its intention, it is but fit they should have the same chance of a *benefit*, though equally without the intention of the Legislature.

* In the Spring of 1762.

Indeed,

Indeed, where the unprovided-for, or unthought-of, Consequence tends naturally to defeat the purpose of the Law, there the Interpreters of it will interpose, and declare the advantage taken to be against the Law; or, which amounts to the same thing, to be unsupported by it. But an accidental *benefit*, which arises from the *restraint* imposed, seems better calculated to effect the end of the *Test Law* (which is to keep the enemies of the Church from office in the State) than a *damage*, which might tempt them to violate their conscience: The *benefit* is, indeed, liable to abuse (and what is there in civil matters which is not so?) but this abuse does not affect the purpose of the Law, which is to keep Sectaries out of Office. But let me not be misunderstood, as if any thing here said, in favour of the sectarian Member, was meant to include the *occasional Conformist*. For if such a one think that he may, with his conscience unhurt, *conform*, for the sake of *lucrative* employments, he can never be permitted, on pretence of Conscience, to plead the restrictive law, in order to evade those which are *onerous*. And here let me further observe, that the Dissenters will not seem to be in the properest circumstances to claim the advantage of the distinction here laid down in their favour, till they have a little reformed their ideas of a *Test-law*. For they have, I think, in order to throw the greater odium upon it, generally represented the prohibition, which it imposes, as inflicted for a *Punishment*. Now we have shewn, that if our Lawgivers intended a *Punishment*, it defeats their purpose, to connive at its becoming an *accidental benefit*. I only remark this for the sake of a general observation, That when Bodies of men, whether civil or ecclesiastical, suffer themselves to be misled by their passions and prejudices, their interests

or resentments, the errors they fall into, will always, sooner or later, turn upon themselves.

Now it appears, both from Reason and Fact, that the TEST is a *restrictive*, and not a *penal* Law, in the proper meaning of these terms.

1. If a Law may be understood in two senses, one of which supports its equity, while the other betrays its injustice, Reason directs us to adopt the first. To *punish* Sectaries, in order to bring them over to the national Religion, is plainly wrong: But to *restrain* Sectaries from hurting the national Religion, is as plainly right. Therefore, though the intention of the Legislature had in this particular instance been doubtful, yet a general Law of a free People would admit of no other interpretation.

2. But the intention of the Legislature was not doubtful: and the reason of the thing is supported by fact. When this Law was made, the *national Church* was deemed, in the public Opinion, to be in much danger both from Protestant and Popish Sectaries. In the early days of its establishment indeed, the Government had endeavoured to bring Both into it; and many *penal Laws* were enacted for that purpose: But, at the time the *Test* became a Law, that visionary and unjust project had been long dropt; and Government was content to confine its care to the *protection*, rather than *extension* of the national Church. Had this latter point been their aim, it was to be effected only by the vigorous execution of the old *penal* Laws then in being. The *Test* added no force to those; but, on the contrary, greatly relaxed their vigour, by disposing Government to repose their chief confidence, and seek their only remedy for disorders, in this new-made Law.

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And now may be seen the strength of that Objection made to the *Test*, as it is legally inforced, to affect the interests of Protestant Dissenters, viz. "that its original and direct intention (a fact no one will deny), was to oppose the machinations of Popery; and that therefore, those being included only by accident, may very reasonably be overlooked." But if the idea here given of the *Test-law* be the true, it is apparent, that the general, though not immediate purpose of the Legislature, in this Law, was to provide for the safety of the national Church, and that for the sake of the State, from what quarter soever the danger might arise. At one season it might spring from *Popery*; at another from *Puritanism*; but the various civil mischiefs, consequent on religious quarrels, were to be repelled, as they sprung up, with equal vigilance and vigour. But let no one by this imagine, that a comparison is here insinuated between Popery and Puritanism. As Religions, they can no more be compared together, than a body irrecoverably corrupted, with one but slightly tainted. Yet, with regard to the civil mischiefs which religious differences occasion, we have experienced, that the lightest matters often produce as great, as the most important: And the surplice and cross in baptism have alienated fellow Citizens against one another as fiercely as the tyrannic claim of a Supremacy, or the superstitious worship of dead men deified.

However, the nature and genius of the two Sects is sufficiently discriminated by *tolerating* the one, and only (under suspended penal laws) *conniving* at the other: But still on the same *civil principles*; these laws not being directed against the religious errors of the *Church*, but the political perversities of the *Court*, *of* Rome; which will not suffer its Subjects to give any

reasonable security for their allegiance to the supreme Magistrate: For with religious errors as such, the State hath nothing to do, nor any right to attempt to repel or suppress them. They are the *civil mischiefs* with which civil Society is concerned, the mischiefs arising from religious quarrels when the two Parties are near equal in Power (as I suppose they would soon be under a Toleration without a Test-law), and are set upon repressing one another's *errors*.

And now, since so much hath been urged in behalf of the Dissenters, their Civil and Religious Rights, they will bear to be reminded of one thing, in their turn; neither to abuse the *Toleration* themselves, nor to screen others in abusing it. And the case I am about to give of One, who, it is pretended, was thus screened, will, I hope, excuse this freedom. It is indeed the case of One who, without doing much injury to our dissenting Brethren, can never be reckoned in their number. This miserable Buffoon, of whom I would be understood to speak, was suffered for near thirty years together to turn all RELIGION and MORALITY into ridicule; once, and, for some time, twice a week, in a licensed place of Devotion in the Capital of the Kingdom. A matter so much to the disgrace of Society, that They, on whom the scandal fell, thought proper to give out, that a vigorous prosecution of this Offender was ordered to be commenced; but that when it was known, the Dissenters took the alarm, as if the *Law of Toleration* was in danger, since this Impostor acted under the common protection of a Licence from *Hicks's Hall*.

Yet, whoever hindered the prosecution, could not but confess, that this was a very vile *abuse* of a most sacred Law: They could not but apprehend that for

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an abused Law to screen the Abuser from punishment, was making Law to EXECUTE itself, in a very different sense from what crafty Politicians have sometimes projected.

But from all that has been here said in behalf of the *Law of Toleration*, let me not be understood as if I could suppose, or would insinuate, that this Law has altered the nature of the crime going under the name of SCHISM, which is an unnecessary separation from the national Church; or, because it hath taken all civil punishment from the offender, that therefore *Schism* is become harmless, and an empty name: and that the Law in favour of *Schismatics*, like the law in favour of WITCHES, had dissipated only a frightful Phantom. It is true, that, in both Cases, the Legislature acted for the same end, the restraint of injustice; but it was on very different principles: In the first case, they took off civil punishment from a *real crime*, not cognizable by a human Judicatory: and, in the latter, they removed an opprobrium from the Statute Book, which expressed a sanguinary resentment against an *imaginary one*.

Schism, or a causeless separation from the national Church, is a crime, which, on all the principles of Law and Reason, deserves condign punishment. But, of this separation, whether with or without cause, there is no adequate Judge, but that Power who can distinguish between a well and an ill-informed Conscience. Very justly therefore did this Free Government remit the question to a wiser Tribunal. But in so doing it did not mitigate, but, by its indulgence, rather aggravate the Guilt, wherever it shall be found, hereafter, to exist. And how wisely so doubtful a point was remitted thither, we may, in part, see from the answer of the *foreign Divines*, to whose judgment,

at the beginning of our Reformation (when the quarrel between the Puritans and the Churchmen about Ceremonies and Discipline ran high), both Parties agreed to submit. Those prudent and honest men, when thus appealed unto, gave it as their opinion, that "the Puritans ought to conform, rather than make a schism; and that the Churchmen ought to indulge the others' scruple, rather than hazard one." A wise decision, and reaching much further, in religious matters, than to the single case to which it was applied.

Schism therefore is no less a crime now, that the Law consigns over its punishment to a proper Judicature, than it was when civil Authority, blindly and ineffectually, interfered to vindicate the honour of Religion from this unhappy scandal.

Thus have we seen what *reputation* accrues to the Church of England, from the establishment of this inestimable Law; and what *benefits* may further accrue to it by the prudent conduct of our Clergy, in its support.

CHAP. II.

WHAT remains of my Subject, will be more particularly addressed to the Ministers of Religion: who are surrounded with Enemies from various quarters; and insulted both by the attacks of INFIDELITY and FANATICISM.

Their defence, therefore, is indeed of necessity to be as much diversified; but it should still be under the safe conduct, and with the simple Armour of TRUTH only. For it is not the honour of a fantastic *Sect of Philosophy* which We are intrusted to support;

port; better committed to the care of those who exercise the talents of its old Patrons, the SOPHISTS; neither is it the credit of a *Traditional Orthodoxy*, which, some of those who are called FATHERS of the Church have, of old, defended with the like arts and arms: But it is the simple GOSPEL of JESUS, equally abhorrent of *refinement* and *deceit*.

I cannot, nor indeed have I any just reason to suspect, that the English Clergy will dishonour so noble a Cause by any premeditated fraud. Yet the most Upright, in the heat of controversy (provoked, and perhaps alarmed at the extravagant powers which Libertines and Fanatics reciprocally ascribe to REASON and to GRACE), have been but too apt to run into destructive extremes, depreciating, and even annihilating, sometimes the One, and sometimes the Other, as best served the purpose they were then pursuing. Of which egregious folly, their Adversaries have never failed to take advantage, by turning their own ill-fashioned and worse-fabricated Arms against them. And this was easily done; since *Revealed Religion* derives its whole support from the joint operation of these two Principles, *Reason* and *Grace*, acting on the human mind with equal and unremitted vigour.

But to understand more sensibly the mischiefs arising from such ill-judged defences of Religion, I shall set before the Reader a capital Example of each of these EXTREMES, of which we are now speaking. From whence we may learn the use and necessity of keeping within that equal MEAN, which most effectually serves to detect and to expose the errors of either Adversary.

It hath ever been amongst the principal arts of Infidelity to make the most extravagant encomiums

on HUMAN REASON; and, consequently, to profess the utmost regard and reverence for, what Unbelievers are pleased to call, NATURAL RELIGION. Under this cover, by the poorest sophistry and hypocrisy imaginable, they have accustomed themselves to undermine REVELATION. But now, What expedient, think you, did some warm defenders of Revelation employ to uphold its credit? You will naturally say, they took care to moderate the extravagant representations of these false friends of *Reason* and *natural Religion*; by marking out the just bounds of the human Faculties, and shewing, how far Reason extends her jurisdiction, and in what she herself prescribes submission: by explaining how necessary a foundation *natural Religion* is to the *Revealed*; how it coincides with it, is completed by it, and so inseparably annexed to it (as the foundation to its superstructure) that nothing can hurt the One which does not injuriously affect the Other; there being no objection, which the Logic of misapplied *Reason* can bring against *Revealed Religion*, which does not hold at least equally strong against the *Natural*.

This they did, you say, because This they ought to have done. Alas! they took a very different course. They declaimed against *human Reason*; they depressed it as extravagantly as their Adversaries had advanced it.—"Should you be so foolish, they told you, as to take it for your Guide, it would lead you to nothing but to sin and misery: that the Gospel disclaimed it, and went entirely on the surer ground of FAITH: that its confessed impotency in defence of *truths revealed*, may shew the absurdity of relying on it to discover *truths unrevealed*." Hence, they assured you, "that the Deists boasted System of *natural Religion* was a Chimera; and that what (under this name) they recommended

commended to the adoration of their followers, was an Impostor, made up of just so much of the *revealed* as was of use to them in combating the rest:" Finally, they said, "that all religious knowledge of the Deity, and of man's relation to him, was *revealed*; and had descended traditionally down (though broken and disjointed in so long a passage) from the *first Man*; who received it as he came out fresh from the forming hands of his Creator."

When our Enemies had gotten these indiscreet friends of Revelation at this advantage, they changed the attack, (for all Arms are indifferent to *them*, but in proportion to their present power of doing mischief) and now tried, how *Revelation* was to be further shaken, on these new and extravagant principles of its Defenders.

I. Accordingly a certain masked Buffoon undertook to turn *one part* of this Paradox against them, in a Discourse to prove that REVELATION WAS NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT; and tempered his irony with so grave and solemn a tone, that many good men mistook this arch-enemy of all godliness to be, at worst, but an over-warm promoter of it. He had two ends in this worthy attempt; the one, to discredit Religion; the other, to excite and encourage Fanatics to discredit it still more.

A fairer Writer against Religion, because a more open, took up the *other part* of the Paradox, with the same righteous design. And as the Buffoon had undertaken to shew that *Revealed Religion was not founded in argument*, so the Declaimer * sets himself to prove that *natural Religion was not founded in common Sense:* for, its existence *depending on the moral attributes* of the Deity, his *justice* and *goodness*, this

* Lord Bolingbroke.

broacher of the last runnings of the FIRST PHILOSOPHY labours to shew that *justice* and *goodness* belong not to him, whose entire essence consists in the *natural attributes* of *wisdom* and *power* only. Hence, under the name of *natural Religion*, he slurs in upon us an *irreligious* NATURALISM. And now *Revelation*, deprived of its foundation, *natural Religion*, and of its best defence and ornament, *human Reason*, lies a scorn to Unbelievers, and a prey to Fanatics and Enthusiasts.

But all this hath not yet taught these wayward Divines, wisdom. We have lately seen them, even at the Fountain of Science, the University *, attempting to support in good earnest the wretched paradox which Mr. —— had so mischievously advanced in jest. And yet one should be utterly at a loss to guess in what the wit or wisdom of it lay, whether advanced in earnest or in jest. But a mischievous Heart will at any time risk the reputation of its head-piece to give the alarm to sober piety; and a warm Head discloses, without fear or wit, the rancour of its bosom, to vilify and bespatter superior Reason. Otherwise, to ask, *Whether Christianity was founded in Reason or in Faith*, would be deemed just as wise a question as *Whether St. Paul's Clock was founded in Mechanism or in Motion?* Since, if it be found to have *motion*, we necessarily conclude that *motion* to be regulated by *mechanism*: So, if the vital principle of Christianity be *Faith*, we necessarily conclude it to be such a *Faith*, as was formed, and may be supported, on the rules and principles of *human Reason*. A wild Indian, perhaps, might imagine that the *Clock* was animated by a Spirit; and an Enthusiast, still wilder than he, may, for aught I know, conclude that *Christianity* rises only out of

* Oxford.

internal

internal impulse. But surely none but a Buffoon or a Fanatic would, for his credit in jest, or for his interest in good earnest, discard the use of Reason in consulting for his *future* happiness, when he has already found it so useful in procuring his *present*. Both the future and the present are acquired by the right adaption, of means to ends; and this adaption, I suppose, will be confessed by all to be in the sole province of REASON. Nor has this heaven-appointed Guide ever given any just cause of complaint or jealousy. When men see themselves bewildered, they ought to suspect themselves: and, I believe, on enquiry, they will always find, that they had been directing *Reason* when they should have been directed by her. But the Passions and Affections, which have occasioned *her* discredit, go on, in their illusions, to excite *our* distrust.

II. Again, these indiscreet friends of Religion, while they were thus pushing the common Adversary, with these imaginary advantages gained by the depression of human reason, did not advert to the mischiefs they were letting in, at the opposite quarters of *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*. POPERY can only stand and flourish on the foundation of *implicit faith*; and the fervours of ENTHUSIASM soon rise into madness, when unchecked by Reason. The PRIEST expects of you to renounce your Understanding, before he will undertake to reconcile you to the Church of Rome; but, indeed, when that is over, he permits you to take up as much of it again, as will serve you to justify your Apostasy. The quarrel, which the FANATIC has to it, is more serious. He is ever feeling its ill effects; and therefore his aversion to it is immortal. When *Ignatius Loyola* was in the Meridian of his Fervours, some of the writings of *Erasmus* chanced to fall into his hands. He was at first seduced, by the charms of the

the composition, to look into them; but finding they had, before he was aware, insensibly damped the inflammation of his Zeal; he cast them from him with abhorrence and execration. The very same disaster, Mr. *J. Wesley* informs us, once befell himself, in his converse with the sober followers of *Erasmus*; insomuch that he was soon forced, he tells us, to avoid them, as the *bane of all Religion*. "I avoid that BANE OF ALL RELIGION, the *company of good sort of men, as they are called. These insensibly undermine all my resolution, and steal away what little* ZEAL *I have* *." If this be true, though they *steal but Trash*, yet they *leave him poor indeed*; as his quondam Master has lately observed. "Your strictures upon "Messieurs of the Foundery, and the Tabernacle, &c. "(says he to a friend) are very just. These gentle- "men seem to have no other bottom to stand upon but "that of ZEAL †." Indeed, against so dangerous an Enemy as SOBER SENSE, the *Fanatic* cannot be too carefully guarded. And therefore, he never thinks himself secure from the mischiefs of *Reason*, till he has, with the same hoarse clamours that the metamorphosed Clowns in the Fable pursued Latona and her godlike Issue; driven away from the neighbourhood of the Saints, both *Reason*, and her fair and celestial Offspring, NATURAL RELIGION and HUMAN LEARNING.

Mr. J. WESLEY, who is ready to exhibit to us every feature of Fanaticism in its turn, has, I fear, been kept so long upon the Scene, as to tire out his Audience; he shall therefore be only once again exhibited, to testify, in a word or two, his civilities to *natural Reason* and *natural Religion*; and then dis-

* Journ. from Aug. 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739, p. 31.

† Mr. W. Law's Collection of Letters, &c. p. 189.

missed

missed for good. As to the first, he frankly tells us, the Father of *lies* was the Father of *reasonings* also: "I observed, (says he) every day more and more, the "advantage *Satan* had gained over us. Many were "thrown into idle *reasonings.*"—And again, Many "of our Sisters are shaken. Betty and Esther H. "are *grievously torn* by *reasonings* *."—His civilities to NATURAL RELIGION, and to that eminent Writer who has so well explained the nature of this first great gift of God to Man, follow next: "Meeting with "a Frenchman of New Orleans (says Mr. Wesley), he "gave us a full and particular account of the *Chica-*"*saws*:—And hence we could not but remark, what "is THE RELIGION OF NATURE, *properly so called,* "*or that Religion which flows from natural Reason,* "*unassisted by Revelation.*" He then speaks of their manners in War.—Their way of living in Peace follows in these words; "They do nothing but eat and drink "and smoak from Morning till Night, and in a manner "from Night till Morning. For they rise at any hour "of the night when they wake, and, after eating and "drinking as much as they can, go to sleep again. "See THE RELIGION OF NATURE *truly* DELINE-"ATED †." What is chiefly curious in this account is, that Mr. Wesley professes to shew us what that Religion is which is *properly called natural, or that which flows from* NATURAL REASON *unassisted by* REVELATION, and yet he gives us, in its stead, only man's *natural manners*, which flow not from his *reason*, but from his *passions and appetites* only; in an example, where *Reason* may be rather said to have a capacity of existence than actually to exist, as being

* Journ. from Nov. 1, 1739, to Sept. 3, 1741, pp. 8 & 17.

† Journ. from his embarking for Georgia, to his return to London, pp. 44, 45.

alike

alike inert and void of power, whether the *Chicasaw* be waking or asleep.

As to HUMAN LEARNING, if the zealous Mr. W. Law does not assault this more rudely than his forward Pupil has insulted NATURAL RELIGION, yet he returns much oftener to the Charge. The last Legacies, which this bountiful Gentleman hath bestowed upon the Public, are *A Collection of Letters*, &c. and *An Address to the Clergy*, &c. In these two Works the hapless Author of the *Divine Legation* is pointed at on every occasion of *abuse*, and held up as the grand Apostate from *Grace* to *Human Reason*; and this chiefly, for denying (what indeed, I neither deny nor affirm, for I take it to be nonsense) That "*Divine* "*Inspiration is* ESSENTIAL *to Man's first created* "*state, and vainly thinking to find out a middle way,* "between this and no inspiration at all, *namely, that* "*the Spirit's ordinary influence occasionally assists* "*the faithful**." For this, and for some few things besides, such as a charge of Spinozism on his beloved Behmenism, I have the honour to be plentifully, though *spiritually* railed at, whenever he fancies he sees me in the Retinue of HUMAN LEARNING.

He lays it down as a Postulatum, "That whatever "comes not IMMEDIATELY from GOD, can have no-"thing *godly* in it. Therefore what comes IMMEDI-"ATELY from SELF, such as NATURAL REASON, "however outwardly coloured, can have no better a "nature within than the very Works of the DEVIL." p. 57.

Now the fruit of *natural reason* being HUMAN LEARNING, (indeed, according to this account, more properly than men were aware of, called *profane Learning*); he thus descants upon it.

* See pp. 12 & 25 of the Address to the Clergy.

First

First of all, he assures us, it has nothing to do with Religion. "Where can God's *Kingdom be come*, but "where every other power, but his, is at an end, and "driven out?—What now have Parts and Literature "and the natural Abilities of man to do here? just as "much as they can do at the Resurrection of the dead; "for all that is to be done here is nothing else but "*Resurrection* and *Life*.—Yet vain man would be "thought to do *something* in this *kingdom of Grace*— "because he has happened to be made a Scholar, has "run through all the Languages and Histories, has "been long exercised in conjectures and criticisms, and "has his head full of all notions, theological, poetical, "and philosophical, as a Dictionary is full of all sorts "of words. Now let this simple question decide the "whole matter here: Has this great Scholar any more "power of saying to this mountain, *Be thou removed* "*hence and cast into the Sea*, than the illiterate Chris- "tian hath?" pp. 96, 97. To this reasoning against *human Learning*, in its use to Religion, little can be opposed. For it is very certain *human Learning* can neither *raise the Dead*, nor *remove Mountains*.

But it is not only useless in *Religion*, but is of infinite mischief.

For 1. It nourisheth PRIDE. "The piercing Critic "may, and naturally will, grow in *pride*, as fast as his "skill in words discovers itself. And *every kind of* "*knowledge* that shews the Orator, the Disputer, the "Commentator, the Historian, his own powers and "abilities, are the same temptation to him that Eve "had from the serpent," &c. Lett. p. 187.

2. It nourisheth *Contention*.—"*Grammar*, *Logic* "and *Criticism*, each knoweth nothing of Scripture "but its words; bringeth forth nothing but its *own* "*wisdom* of words, and a Religion of wrangle, hatred,

"and

"and contention about the meaning of them." Address, p. 122.

3. It turneth Religion to a *trade*.—"Where *self*, "or the *natural man* is become great in *religious* "*Learning*, there, the greater the Scholar, the more "firmly will he be fixed in their Religion, *whose God* "*is their belly*." p. 59.

4. It is *the abomination of desolation*.—"*Genius* "and *Learning* entered into the pale of the Church "—Behold, if ever, *the abomination of desolation* "standing in the holy place.—Christ has no where "spoken one single word, or given the least power to "*Logic, Learning*, or the *natural powers of man* IN "HIS KINGDOM." p. 114. By this; we find, that CHRIST'S KINGDOM may be usurped as well by *classic Learning* as by CHURCH DISCIPLINE. It is certain, our modern ideas of *religious Liberty* can consist with neither of them, for this *Liberty* claims an exemption both from REASON and OBEDIENCE.

5. It chuseth *darkness rather than light*.—"But "now, Who can more reject this divine light" [i. e. the *light of the world*, re-illuminated by the *blessed Jacob*, as he calls him] "or more plainly choose dark- "ness instead of it, than he who seeks to have his "mind enriched, the faculties of his fallen soul culti- "vated, by the literature of Poets, Orators, Philoso- "phers, Sophists, Sceptics, and Critics, born and bred "up in the worship and praises of Idol Gods and "Goddesses?"

6. Finally, it is a total *Apostasy* from God and Goodness.—"The practice of all Churches for many "ages, has had recourse to *Learning*, *Art*, and *Sci-* "*ence*, to qualify Ministers for the preaching of the "Gospel—To this more than to any other cause, is the "*great Apostasy* of all Christendom to be attributed.

"—The

" —The death of all that is good in the Soul, have " now and always had their chief nourishment and " support from the sense of the merit and sufficiency of " literal accomplishments—And the very *life of Jesus* " *in the Soul* is by few people less earnestly desired, " or more hard to be practised, than by *great Wits*, " *Classical-Critics, Linguists, Historians*, and *Orators* " in holy orders." (Lett. p. 37.)—And again—" This " empty *letter-learned knowledge*, which the natural " man can as easily have of the Sacred Scripture and " human matters, as of any other books or human " affairs, this being taken for *divine knowledge* has " spread such darkness and delusion all over Chris- " tendom, as may be reckoned no less than a GENERAL " APOSTASY from the Gospel state of *divine illumi-* " *nation*." (Address, p. 94.)

We see by this, that the grand mistake of Scholars has hitherto been, in supposing, that the true sense of Scripture is to be discovered by the application of those Principles which enable us to find out the meaning contained in other ancient Books.

And now the good man having worked up his *enthusiasm* into a poetical ferment (for, as it has been said, that a Poet is an Enthusiast in jest, so, he shews us, that an Enthusiast may be a Poet in good earnest) he adorns these powerful reasonings with a string of as beauteous Similes, in discredit of *human Learning*.

1. It is compared to the *fall of man*.—" Look " (says he) at the present state of Christendom, glory- " ing in the light of *Greek and Roman Learning*, and " you will see the *fall* of the present Church from its " *first Gospel-state*, to have much likeness to the *fall* " *of the first divine man*, from the glory of paradisiacal " innocence, and heavenly purity, into an earthly state

" and

"and bestial life of worldly craft and serpentine subtilty." p. 98.

2. It is directly compared to the *old Serpent*—"What a poverty of sense in such to set themselves "down at the feet of a *Master Tully*, and a *Master* "*Aristotle!* who only differ from the meanest of all "other corrupt men, as the *teaching Serpent* differed "from his fellow-animals, by being *more subtle than* "*all the beasts of the field.*" pp. 139, 140.

3. It is compared to the *Tower of Babel*—"A "*Tower of Babel* may, to its builders' eyes, seem to "hide its head in the clouds; but as to its *reaching of* "*Heaven*, it is no nearer to that than the earth on "which it stands. It is thus with all the buildings of "Man's wisdom—He may take the *logic* of Aristotle, "add to that the *rhetoric* of Tully, and then ascend as "high as he can on the ladder of *Poetic* imagination, "yet no more is done to the reviving the lost life of "God in his Soul, than by a Tower of Brick and "Mortar, to reach Heaven." p. 104.

4. Again, it is compared to *Idolatry*—"What is it "that most of all hinders the *death of the old man?*— "It is the fancied riches of *Parts*, the glitter of *genius*, "the flights of *imagination*, the glory of *Learning*, "and the self-conceited strength of *natural Reason:* "these are the *strong holds* of fallen nature, the "Master-builders of *Pride's Temple*, and which, as so "many *Priests*, keep up the *daily worship* of IDOL SELF." p. 110.

But, now his poetical Enthusiasm has blazed itself out; and he comes again to himself.—We know how the lucid intervals of a Fanatic are wont to be employed; generally in covering the madness of the *Hot* fit with the most deliberate and unblushing falsehoods of the *Cold*.

From

From what hath past, rash Divines might be apt to charge this holy man, so meek of Spirit, with *Enthusiasm*,—with a brutal spite to *Reason*,—and with more than Vandalic rage against *human Learning*. But they wrong him greatly. 1. As to *Enthusiasm*, he says,—"What an argument would this be; *Enthusiasts* have "made a bad use of the doctrine of being *led by the* "*Spirit of God*; ergo, He is *Enthusiastical* who "preaches up the doctrine of being *led by the spirit* "*of God*. Now absurd as this is, was any of my Ac-"cu-ers, as high in *Genius*, as bulky in *Learning*, as "*Colossus* was in Stature, he would be at a loss to "bring a stronger argument than this to prove me an "*Enthusiast*, or an abettor of them." p. 51. This is plainly unanswerable, unless you read, as his Accuser wrote it, for—*who preaches up the doctrine*—*who* ABUSIVELY *preaches up the doctrine.*

2. "Another Charge (says he) upon me, equally "false, and, I may say, more senseless, is. that I am a "declared Enemy to the *use of Reason in Religion.* "And, why? Because in all my writings I teach that "Reason *is to be denied.* I own it, and this, because "Christ has said, *Whoever will come after me, let him* "*deny himself.* For how can a man *deny himself* with-"out denying *his reason*, unless *reason* be no part of "himself?" p. 52. Now I am at a loss to know, How any one can become an enemy to another more declared, than by *denying* or *renouncing* that other. Were I to *deny* my Sovereign, I should be soon taught to know, that he considered me as his enemy, and would probably treat me accordingly. But Sovereign-Reason has no *Attorney-General*, unless perhaps, it be that *Colossus* he speaks of, and so loudly defies.—However, if human *Reason* can argue no better than Mr. Law, I am ready to *deny* her too.—For, a Man's

self, I have been taught, has a two-fold acceptation; his *Reason* may be called, *himself*, and so may his *Passions*. If therefore he be commanded to *deny himself*, I should conclude, it was not his *better* self, his *Reason*, but the *worse*, his *Passions*, to which the divine Command refers.

3. Then as to *human Learning*, the Charge, he tells us, is as *false and senseless* as the rest—"Shew me a "Scholar as full of *learning* as the Vatican is of Books, "and he will be just as likely to give all that he hath "for the *Gospel-Pearl*, as he would be, if he was as "rich as Crœsus. LET NO ONE HERE IMAGINE I "AM WRITING AGAINST ALL HUMAN LITERATURE, "*arts, and sciences*, or that I wish the World to be "without them. *I am no more an Enemy to them*, "than to the common useful labours of life. *It is* "*literal Learning, verbal contention, and critical strife* "about the things of God that I charge with folly, and "mischief to Religion. And, in this, I have all "learned Christendom, both Popish and Protestant, "on my side; for they both agree in charging each "other, with a bad and false Gospel-state, because of "that, which their Learning, Logic, and Criticism do "for them." p. 151. There are no such proficients in *sophistry* as the declared enemies of *Reason*; nor any so dexterous in legerdemain as the merest bunglers in Mechanics.—He is not an Enemy, he tells us, to *human literature*, but to *literal learning* only: That is, he approves of Learning contained in Letters, but not of Letters contained in Learning. The truth is, he would willingly in this distress take shelter, did he know how, even in the *graceless* company of *Men of Taste*; who, like him, to hide their ignorance, are always scoffing at the Pedantry of *literal learning and verbal criticism* with the same good sense that an Artificer

Artificer abuses those Tools of his trade which he knows not how to work with.—Again, do *Popish* and *Protestant* Disputers ever say to one another—*You support a bad and false Gospel by Learning, Logic, and Criticism?* Do not their reciprocal accusations of one another's errors turn upon the WANT *of Learning, Logic, and Criticism?* Or was Mr. Law, indeed, so ignorant as he pretends, when he supposes there are now *two* Kinds of Learning, Logic, and Criticism, a Popish and a Protestant; instead of *one*, founded and perfected on Principles, held by both Parties in common?—All that they charge on one another is the *abuse* of these Principles.

But to draw towards an end with this furious Behmenist—In all this ribaldry, the only chance he has of misleading illiterate and weak Mortals, is by the repeated insinuations, that all religious dissensions are owing to these mischief-makers, *Reason* and *Human Learning*; and that, in their absence, there is a perfect accord in Religion. But this is the fancy of none but Bards or Enthusiasts; who never saw, but in poetic, or ecstatic Visions, that time when

" Christians and Jews one heavy Sabbath kept;
" And all the Western World believ'd and slept."

Before *mortals either writ or read*, the quarrels of Dunces were as fierce as those of Wits. In Religion, the dissensions amongst the *irrational Sects* have ever been as implacable as those amongst the *Rational*. And if, in those miserable conflicts, the wounds of the latter went deeper, it was because their force was greater and their weapons better.

To conclude, When I reflect on the wonderful infatuation of this ingenious man, who has spent a long life in hunting after, and, with an incredible appetite,

devouring, the trash dropt from every species of Mysticism, it puts me in mind of what Travellers * tell us of a horrid Fanaticism in the East, where the Devotee makes a solemn vow never to taste of other food than what has passed through the entrails of some impure or Savage Animal. Hence their whole lives are passed (like Mr. Law's amongst his Ascetics) in Woods and Forests, far removed from the converse of mankind.

And now, to turn back to our FREETHINKER. As professed an Adorer as he would be thought of his Sovereign Mistress, REASON, we shall see, that the modern Infidel, like the Pagans of old, when their Gods proved unkind, can himself, on occasion, treat his favourite IDOL with the utmost ignominy and contempt; for as one of the most ingenuous of this holy Brotherhood has freely confessed, *When Reason is against a Man, a Man will always be against Reason* †.

They had so long boasted of the Power of this their favourite Idol, They had so loudly trumpeted the virtue of her Orient beam for driving away those Phantoms conjured up by *Revelation*, in the dark Regions of *Superstition*, that the able and sober Divine thought it high time to check their impertinent triumphs; and shew the World, On which side REASON had declared herself. In order to this, they inforced and illustrated (defecated from the dross of the SCHOOLS) the invincible arguments of their Predecessors in support of Revelation; to which they added large and noble accessions of their own. What was now to be done? The Deist could not directly degrade that *Reason* which he had already inthroned. Yet finding Her in this service, he thought he had a right to insinuate that she was no better than she should be;

* Tavernier. † Hobbes.

and

and had, like other common Prostitutes, changed her name, and affected to be called POLEMIC DIVINITY.

It must be confessed, that the unguarded manner in carrying on Theologic controversy had subjected it to much deserved censure. This, joined to the sort of Learning employed in divers of the more early defences of Religion, where, both the fashion and standard smelt strongly of the barbarous form and base alloy of the SCHOOLS, gave them a large handle to run down all the defences that followed. Some parts of POLEMIC DIVINITY, appeared, on their Principles, to be trifling; other parts bore hard upon their Conclusions; so they took advantage of what was faulty in itself, and sought advantage of what appeared impertinent to them, to ridicule the whole. Hence *Polemic Divinity* became the whetstone of their wit, and the constant Butt of their malice. As the credit of Deism advanced, this cant grew familiar, and spread itself into the fashionable World. Nor could the divine Genius of those Masters of Reason, a GROTIUS, or an EPISCOPIUS, a HOOKER, or a CHILLINGWORTH, when once nick-named *Polemic Divines*, hinder them from being enrolled amongst *Scotists* and *Thomists*, and the veriest rabble of the Schoolmen, by some of the more ignorant or indiscreet of all Parties. But the thing most to be lamented is, to see any well-meaning Clergyman of affected taste and real ignorance, go out of his depth, as well as out of his Profession, to exert his small talents of ridicule on the same subject, merely for the sake of being in the fashion; and, free from all malice as well as wit, treat *Polemical Divinity* (which, for all the hard name, is indeed nothing but a critical examination of the doctrines of our Faith) as cavalierly as ever did Collins or Tindal, Lords Shaftsbury

or Bolingbroke. Yet, had these small-dealers in second-hand Ridicule but the least adverted on their doings, they must have seen the absurdity as well as mischief of so unweighed and wanton a conduct.

Their ADVERSARIES had *sufficient provocation*, and were not without a *plausible pretence* for their quarrel with POLEMIC DIVINITY, whether it were employed in supporting Revelation in general against the common Enemy, or in defending the Gospel-truths against the errors of Sectaries.

The PROVOCATION they had received was not small. The Friends of *Revelation* having a Religion to defend, which was founded on the Authority of a Divine Messenger, who appealed to *Miracles* performed, and to *Prophecies* fulfilled, They supposed the most simple and natural method was to prove the truth of this Religion, as all other human transactions are proved, by FACTS. This was at length so invincibly performed, that their Enemies were forced to have recourse to their favourite Deity, REASON, to undo the knot, and free them from their Embarras. Her power, they had long objected to believers, as the only barrier against *Superstition*; and now was the time to press it home. "You urge us with *facts*, say they, and the *testimony of Antiquity*; Supports too slender to bear the unnatural load of *Revelation*. A thing impossible in itself, as it contradicts the established order of Providence: a thing impossible under the Bible-representation of it, as several passages in that Book directly oppose our common notices of God's Attributes. Would you have us give credit to your fond notions of Revelation, let us see you support it on our common principles of Philosophy, natural, dialectic, and metaphysical. When you have done this, we shall be satisfied, for on these principles only

will

will REASON allow us to submit." This was what they pretended to expect; and Divines took them at their word; and immediately entered upon, and soon completed a defence of Revelation, on this new prescribed method of proof. How effectually, the prevarication of their Adversaries, of which I am going to speak, amply evinces. For no sooner was that done which they had so vainly represented as impossible, than they changed their tone, and now attempted to ridicule it as a very impertinent achievement. "It is astonishing (says the Goliah of their "party) how Divines could take so much silly pains "to establish mystery on metaphysics, revelation on "philosophy, and matters of fact on abstract Reason-"ing. Religion, such as the Christian, which ap-"peals to facts, must be proved as all other facts "that pass for authentic are proved. If they are "thus proved, the Religion will prevail without the "assistance of so much profound Reasoning*." This was what the learned Divine got for his pains! not only to have his Compliance laughed at, but, what is the common attendant on Ridicule, to have it falsified. *Divines*, we see, are represented as *applying their metaphysics, philosophy, and profound reasoning, to Prophecies, and Miracles.* How gross the misrepresentation! They had more wit, they had more honesty, than to take that *silly pains*. They employed their Philosophy as became such Masters of Reason, not to matters of *fact*, but of *right*. It was pretended that God could not give a *Revelation*; that he could not select a *Chosen People*; that he could not accept a *vicarious Atonement:* And against these bold assertions, the Christian Divine directed all the force and

* Lord Bolingbroke's *Letters concerning the Study and Use of History.*

evidence of TRUE PHILOSOPHY. With what success, a better posterity shall tell with gratitude. This is the *spite*, I meant, which Unbelievers bear to that part of *Polemic Divinity*, which concerns the Being and Nature of Revelation.

The PLAUSIBLE PRETENCE they had to ridicule and contemn the rest, which is employed in settling and adjusting the various MODES of Religion, comes next to be considered. These men holding *Religion* itself to be visionary and fantastic, laughed, and naturally enough, to see such a bustle made about its *modes*; which, on their ideas, was a dispute, about a Nothing once removed.

But now, to see the *Friends* of Revelation disposed to laugh with them, and to ridicule either one or other of these parts of *Polemic Divinity*, is not amongst the least of those absurd perversities, in which common life, at present, so much abounds. For is that which makes *our Hope not ashamed*, and supports the *Faith which is counted for righteousness*, is that, I say, the natural, the reasonable object of a *Christian man's* contempt? But as this latter part is more generally known by the name of *Polemic Divinity*, and is the more usual topic of fashionable ridicule, it may be proper to add a word or two on the extreme folly of imitating the airs of our Adversaries, on this occasion. We have observed that the Freethinker was not without some excuse in laughing at this part of *religious Controversy*, since, on his ideas, it was disputing about the *modes* of a *non-entity*. But the Christian Divine takes his FAITH for a Reality; and therefore can never deem the *modes* of it to be indifferent; but must hold, that, of the various opinions arising from thence, some, with their truths, may be useful, and some, with their errors, hurtful to Society: So that

when, about these *modes*, Churches differ, they become as reasonably the subject of serious enquiry, as any other real entities whatsoever; and have their importance in proportion to their good or bad influence on Truth and Virtue. In a word, POLEMIC DIVINITY is, in the fancy of a Libertine, a squabble for preference between two Falsehoods; in which, there is room enough for ridicule: But on the Principles of a Believer, it is a contest between Truth and Falsehood; in which, there is nothing to be laughed at, though much to be lamented.

CHAP. III.

BUT there was never yet *extravagance*, either of UNBELIEVER or FANATIC, which the over-zealous Advocate of Religion and sober Piety hath not unhappily opposed by a contrary, and frequently by as *mischievous* an *extreme*.

We have seen how unwarily some of them have been drawn in to depreciate and to degrade HUMAN REASON, when their Adversaries had too extravagantly advanced it. They have, at other times, advanced it as extravagantly, when their Adversaries were in an humour to vilify and disgrace it.

To understand what I mean, we must go a little back in the History of *Fanaticism:* And They, whom this matter most concerns, will need no other proof of the folly of such a conduct than what arises from the historical detection of it.

The REDEMPTION OF MANKIND by the death of Christ, and the SACRIFICE of himself upon the Cross, together with its consequent Doctrine of JUSTIFICA-

TION

TION BY FAITH ALONE, were the great Gospel-principles on which PROTESTANTISM was founded, on the first general Separation from the *Church of Rome:* by some, perhaps, carried too far, in their zeal for setting it at a mortal distance from the *Popish* Doctrine of *Merits*; the Puritanic schism amongst us being made on a pretence that the Church of England had not receded far enough from *Rome.* However, being Gospel-Principles, they were held to be the badge of true Protestantism by all: When the Puritans (first driven by Persecution from religious into civil Faction, and by these Factions heated, on both sides, into Enthusiasm) carried the doctrine of *Justification by Faith alone* into a dangerous and impure *Antinomianism:* For it is of the very nature of Enthusiasm to run all its notions to extremes. The speculation was soon after reduced to practice, by means of that knavery which always mixes itself with Enthusiasm, when once the *Fanatic* becomes engaged in Politics. The confusions which ensued are well known: And no small share of them has been ascribed to this impious abuse of the doctrine of *Justification by Faith alone*; first, by depreciating MORALITY, and then by *dispensing* with it.

When the CONSTITUTION was restored, and had brought into credit those few learned Divines whom the madness of the preceding times had driven into obscurity, the Church of England, still smarting with the wounds it had received from the *abuse* of the great Gospel-principles of FAITH, very wisely laboured to restore MORALITY, the other essential part of the Christian System, to its Rights, in the joint direction of the Faithful. Hence, the encouragement the Church gave to those noble Discourses, which did such credit to Religion, in the licentious times of Charles

Charles the Second, composed by these learned and pious men, whom Zealots abused by the nickname of LATITUDINARIAN Divines. But the reputation they acquired by so effectually suppressing these rank Seeds of Fanaticism, made their Successors ambitious of sharing with them in the same honours: a laudable ambition! but men have ever a vain passion for improving upon those who went before. The Church was now triumphant; the Sectaries were humbled; sometimes oppressed; always regarded with an eye of jealousy and aversion; till at length this Gospel-principle of FAITH came to be esteemed by many, as *Fanatical:* And they, who understood its true Original, found so much difficulty in adjusting the distinct Rights of GRACE and MORALITY, that, by the time this Century commenced, things were come to such a pass (MORALITY was advanced so high, and FAITH so frittered into nonsense), that a new definition of our Religion, in opposition to its Founders, and unknown to its early Followers, was grown to be the fashionable tenet of the times: and *Christianity,* which till now had been understood as but coëval with REDEMPTION, was henceforth to be esteemed *as old as the* CREATION: an eminent Divine having, in a public Discourse, asserted, without circumstance or restriction, that *Christianity was a republication of the Religion of Nature.* Thus, between the two opposite Parties of Divines, we were, at the same time, left without either *natural* or *revealed* Religion. The one, we see, denied the very being of the *natural;* and the other assured us that the *revealed* was nothing else than that exploded non-entity.

This REPUBLICATION had, in effect, been talked of before, by many others of equal reputation: but being now explained, and ready to be received as the established

established System, our Adversaries began to think it time to check so ridiculous a triumph; and to *discredit Religion* (which they have always done with much success) *on the principles of its Defenders.* For with the wanton Libertine,

——" It is the sport, to see
" The Engineer hoist with his own Petar."

And one of the Party, an Enemy, equally determined, to *Grace* and *Morality*, composed that famous Book, intitled, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, to decry all *Revelation* whatsoever, on this very principle of a REPUBLICATION; so unhappily conceived by modern Orthodoxy, as the surest way of evincing the *reasonableness* of the GOSPEL.

The like Advantage (to put things of a sort together, for the better illustration of the Subject), had, about the same time, been taken of our indiscretions by another of these men; and as the reasoning of TINDAL was directed to depreciate the Work of REDEMPTION, so the argument of COLLINS was inforced to insult the Character of the REDEEMER. The general body of the PROPHECIES which relate to JESUS, were, for certain great ends of Providence, so contrived, as to have a *primary* accomplishment in the events of the Mosaic Dispensation, and a *secondary* and final completion in the birth and ministry and sufferings of *Jesus the Messiah.* But the admirable contrivance of divine Wisdom, in giving to those Predictions a *primary* and a *secondary* accomplishment, being either soon forgotten, or generally overlooked, it produced large swarms of fanciful and fanatic Allegorists, who filled the Church with extravagant whimsies equally dishonourable to *Reason* and *Religion.* Amidst so thick a cloud of nonsense, the *logical propriety* as well

as

as *moral fitness* of a *secondary sense* in the Prophecies relating to Jesus, being swallowed up and lost, some bold and hasty men, ever least qualified to distinguish between the use and the abuse of a positive institution, ventured to condemn *all secondary* senses, as irrational and fanatical; and finding but few Prophecies which relate to the MESSIAH, in the *primary*, they were forced upon the desperate expedient of holding, that the Jews, or other Enemies of Christianity, had adulterated and corrupted the whole body of these Prophecies, as they stand at present in our Bibles. But no sooner had Mr. Collins got these rash Men at this advantage, than he insulted them with his Discourse on the *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*: In which he attempts to overthrow the Gospel on these two principles: 1st, That (by the confession of his Adversaries) a *secondary* sense of Prophecies is irrational and fanatical; And 2dly, That (by the confession of all sober men) the Jews had not corrupted or adulterated their Bible. His conclusion is, that the *Christian Religion* stands on no solid *grounds or reasons*; Jesus not having, as he pretended, been foretold under the Character of the MESSIAH of the Jews.—And here, let it be observed, that these works of *Tindal* and *Collins*, both rising on the advantage taken of our follies, are the two most artful and desperate attacks on Revelation, that were ever made since the times of *Celsus* and *Porphyry*.

I have attempted to give a good Account of Mr. Collins's *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* elsewhere *, by confuting his first Proposition, on which the whole attack rises, and shewing the *logical propriety* and *moral fitness* of SECONDARY senses of Prophecy. I shall hereafter have occasion

* Divine Legation, Book vi. § 5, 6.

to

to do equal justice to Mr. Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. For the only effectual way of answering these, as indeed all others of the like kind, is to renounce all fanciful Systems, and to preserve inviolate the great Principles of the *Mosaic Law* and the *Gospel of Jesus*; Principles which discover themselves, and indeed obtrude themselves upon us, on a careful study of those two connected Dispensations. When these Principles are once forsaken, there is no hurtful indiscretion to which the ablest Divines are not subject; and of which Unbelievers have not taken advantage. I shall, from amongst many, select an instance or two, least likely to give offence. The Advocates of the Church of *Rome*, to evade the charge of Idolatry, with which they are urged by the *Reformed*, pretend that this crime consists in giving the worship, due to the supreme GOD, to inferior Beings. The excellent Bishop Stillingfleet, in opposing this subterfuge, attempted to prove, that the most civilized Pagans, who are confessed to be Idolaters, did not give the honours due to the *first Cause* to their inferior Gods; the *first Cause*, as he pretends, being worshipped by them, as such: An assertion, which, if true, would confute all that the Prophets and Apostles say concerning the state and condition of the Pagan World. Again, the very learned Dr. Prideaux, to do honour to his exiled Jews, adopts, from Hyde and a rabble of lying Orientalists, the idle fable of a Philosophic Zoroaster, the subverter of Idolatry in Persia: Little attentive the while, to the more plausible conclusion of Unbelievers, from the same fact; who pretend, that these Jews, so prone to Idolatry before their *Captivity*, were instructed during its continuance, by this Zoroaster, in a better Theology, which gave them juster notions of the Divine Nature, and

and consequently, of a Crime that, ever afterwards, they held in abhorrence. A conclusion pushed with great advantage by *Collins* and *Morgan*, on the ground thus prepared by Hyde, and further smoothed for them by Dr. Prideaux.

But to go on with our subject, Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation.*

This terrible advantage taken of a Principle become fashionably orthodox, greatly alarmed all serious men; and the feeble Answers given to it, on that Principle, were so little satisfactory, that a commendable effort was made, by some whose Stations supported them in the attempt, to bring back the slighted Doctrine of REDEMPTION, and to reinstate it in its ancient Credit. And a worthy Bishop of London was amongst the first to repair the mischief, which the mistaken labours of his no less worthy Successor had unwittingly occasioned. So that, in a little time, we had regained much of the ground that had been lost, and were ready to replace the national *Faith* once again on its old Gospel-foundation; in spite of the silly pains of a very equivocal Divine, who published a Book, in opposition to the returning Current, intitled, *The Scripture Doctrine of Redemption*, which was to prove that in reality there was no such thing: When the old puritan Fanaticism revived under the new name of *Methodism*; and, as it spread, carried once more (as far as the difference of times would allow) those Gospel-principles to their old abusive extremes.

This soon put a stop to the recovery of that middle way, in which *Grace* and *Morality* are preserved in their respective rights: an unhappy disposition now appearing in several Opposers of this late revived fanaticism, to return back to the old *latitudinarian* excesses.

And

And now comes in (I hope, not improperly) the Caution, for the sake of which I have given this long detail of our former miscarriages, to warn men against a repetition of them.

For these opposed doctrines of a REDEMPTION and a REPUBLICATION are not matters of so slight moment, that either of them may be taken up, or laid down at pleasure, just as we are pressed, on the one hand, by *Infidelity*, or on the other, by *Fanaticism*.

The DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION, is the *primum mobile* of the Gospel-System. To this the Church must steadily adhere, let the storm, against it, beat from what quarter it may. It is the first duty of the Ministers of Religion, to secure this great Foundation: They may then, with safety, and not with the less success, push the Enemies of the Church, the Enemies of their Order, nay, even the Enemies of their own peculiar opinions, with all the force they are able; but ever, as we say, in subserviency to the EVERLASTING GOSPEL, whose main Pillar is this *Doctrine of Redemption*.—How essential a part it is of the Gospel-Economy (interpreted by God's general Dispensation, revealed to mankind, of which the Gospel-Economy is the completion), and how agreeable it is to what the best and most received Philosophy teacheth us, concerning the relations between the creature and the Creator, shall be considered at large in its proper place *.

I. What better suits the melancholy subject we are now upon, namely, the advantages given to the common Enemy by those, who, to get rid of some urgent difficulty, are apt to forsake their Foundations, will be to shew the various and unthought-of mischiefs

* Divine Legation, Book IX.

which

which arise from the folly of attempting to change the nature of the Gospel-Economy from a *Redemption of Mankind* to a *Republication of the Religion of Nature.* A folly, by which the great Author of our Salvation becomes dishonoured, and the Christian Faith exposed to the perpetual Insults of Libertines and Unbelievers.

1. For he who considers Jesus only in the light of a *Republisher* of the Law of Nature, can hardly entertain a higher opinion of the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD than some have done of SOCRATES, whom Erasmus esteemed an object of devotion, and many a better Protestant hath thought to be divinely inspired. For was not Socrates, by his preaching up *moral virtue*, and by his dying to bear witness to the *unity* of the Godhead, *made*, to the Grecian People, and (by means of their extended commerce of politeness) to the rest of mankind, *Wisdom and Righteousness?* And what more was Jesus, though the Apostle adds to those two attributes, these two other, of *Sanctification* and *Redemption?* for, according to the principles of this paganized Christianity, his titles of MESSIAH and REDEEMER are reduced to mere figurative and *accommodated* terms.

2. As this Theology degrades Jesus to the low condition of a Grecian Sophist; so it renders his Religion obnoxious to the insults of every daring Impostor.

He was sent, say these new Doctors of the Church, to teach mankind the worship of the true God, and the practice of moral righteousness *.

" This

* A celebrated Frenchman, who writes on all subjects, and, on all, with equal judgment and capacity, knew better, perhaps,

"This will be readily allowed, replies an understanding MAHOMETAN: And on this very principle, WE hold, that when Jesus had done his office; and mankind had again relapsed, into *anti-christian* Idolatry and Polytheism, as before into *Pagan*, God sent OUR PROPHET, who worked the like sudden and sensible reformation in the NORTH-EAST, that your Prophet did in the NORTH-WEST."

And this reply, he makes on the very principles of his ALCORAN; which (with professions of the highest veneration for the character of JESUS) denies his proper Divinity, and at the same time, his death on the cross. But, why, it may be asked, was this aversion to the PASSION of One whom the Alcoran makes a Mortal? For this plain reason: *Mahomet*, who wanted the refinement of our modern *Accommodators*, plainly saw that the doctrine of REDEMPTION followed the *passion*; completed the *Scheme of Revelation*; and shut out all his bold pretences.

M. Otter, an intelligent Frenchman of the Academy Royal of Inscriptions, &c. tells us of a conference he had with a learned Persian. The Mussulman said, They reverenced all our sacred Writings except those of St. PAUL—*qu'ils respectent tous, excepté Saint Paul**. Why this *exception?* I answer, On the Mahometan Principle, that *Christianity is only a republication of the Religion of Nature:* for St. PAUL is full of the doctrine of REDEMPTION; explains the Christian

what he was about than these Divines, when he went further, and affirmed, That Christianity is not only no more than the Religion of Nature perfected, but that *it could not possibly* be any more. —"Nôtre Religion revélée n'est même, et *ne pouvoit etre*, que cette Loi naturelle perfectionnée." *Discours sur le Theisme*, par M. de Voltaire.

* Voiage en Turque et en Perse, vol. i. p. 22.

Christian System by it, and makes the whole Faith depend upon it.

What now has our rational *Republisher* to oppose to this modest Apology for Ismaelism?

All he has to say is this, "That Jesus and his Apostles have every where intimated, that the *Gospel* is the last of God's Dispensations; on the terms of which our final doom is to be decided: so that all future Pretenders to the like Office and Character must needs be deemed Impostors."

But here a DEIST would come in, to take advantage of our distress; for (as we have said more than once) it may be observed alike of all these shifting defences, on fanciful, and unscriptural Systems, that they only supply new arms to the various Adversaries of our Faith; a *Deist*, I say, would be ready to reply, "That it is indeed true that Jesus hath declared his own Mission to be the LAST: but that this is a sly contrivance, put in use by every pretended Messenger from Heaven, in order to perpetuate his own Scheme, and to obviate the danger of an antiquated authority. The Impostor, MAHOMET himself, hath done it. He, who here obtrudes his *armed* pretensions upon us, hath secured the duration of his sensual Religion by the very same expedient: a thing, in his ideas, so much of course, that he did not even object to JESUS's use of it, who employed it before Him; and for no other purpose than to cut off all following pretensions to the like Character. On the contrary, He avowed and maintained the general truth of the Nazarite's Commission. Now (pursues the Deist) a method employed by a confessed Impostor is taken up with an ill grace by the defender of true Religion. But I draw a further consequence (says he) against the GOSPEL, from this re-

presentation of Christianity. For if the preaching of moral truth and righteousness were the whole of JESUS's Character and Office, then his Mission did not answer its end, the lasting reformation of mankind, in the *knowledge of God*, and in the *practice of Virtue:* since the world soon fell back again into the state from which JESUS had delivered it; as appears from the history of the times in which MAHOMET appeared, and the advantages he made of that degeneracy."

II. Thus subjected to the insults and injuries of all sorts of Impostors, who set themselves to delude the credulous, either by inventing NEW Revelations or by decrying the OLD, do these *Republishers* expose the holy faith of JESUS: that *Faith*, which, we are told, was *founded on a rock*, impregnable to Men and Demons; to the sophisms of Infidelity, and the prestiges of Imposture! And so indeed it is, if we will take it as we find it; if we will receive it as it came from above; if we will preserve it pure and entire as it was delivered to the Saints, under the idea of THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD, BY THE SON OF GOD, IN THE VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF UPON THE CROSS.

This secures the Character of JESUS from the insults of false Pretenders; and his GOSPEL from the injuries of false Reasoners.

1. For, first of all, if JESUS did, indeed, *redeem* Mankind, and restore them to their lost Inheritance; the scheme and progress of Revelation is completed: which beginning at the LAPSE, naturally and necessarily ends in the restoration and recovery of LIFE AND IMMORTALITY by the death and passion of our Lord. CHRISTIANITY considered in this view (and in this view only, does SCRIPTURE give it us to consider)

sider) soon detects all the artful pretences of Imposture; and secures its own honour by virtue of its very *Essence:* the great scene of Providence being now closed, in a full completion of its One, regular, entire, and eternal purpose.

2. Secondly, if JESUS did indeed *redeem* mankind, then did he neither preach nor die in vain: it not being in man's power, with all his malice and perverseness, to defeat or make void the great purpose of his Coming. For though one part of his Mission (according to Paul) was to instruct the world in *Wisdom* * and *Righteousness*, which it was in man's power to forget and neglect; yet, what (Paul tells us) is chiefly essential in his Character, and peculiar to his Office, the *Sanctification* and *Redemption* of the World, Man could not frustrate nor render ineffectual: For it is not in man's power to make that to be undone which is once done and perfected.

The fastidious Caviller † therefore hath employed his pains to little purpose in attempting to discredit Revelation from this topic, *The moral state of the world, before and since the coming of Christ.* For, besides what one might venture to affirm, that, when the comparison is fully and impartially scrutinized, the advantage will be found to lie on the side of our Religion: yet, supposing the Truths preached by JESUS, and the Assistance given by the Holy SPIRIT, have not much improved the general morals of mankind; How does this tend to the discredit of the Gospel? unless it can be shewn that the Gospel hath no natural tendency to make men better. But this is so desperate an undertaking, that, I believe, Infidelity will hardly be persuaded to engage in it. Indeed the contrary is so true, that, (as I have shewn elsewhere) when you lay toge-

* 1 Cor. i. 30. † Lord Bolingbroke.

ther

ther the state of PAGAN and CHRISTIAN Morals, one manifest and essential difference is found between them; which is this, That in the Gentile world, men often acted wrong UPON PRINCIPLE; in the Christian always AGAINST PRINCIPLE*. Now, not to insist upon the necessary restraint this must needs be upon Vice; it plainly demonstrates that the NATURAL TENDENCY of the *Gospel* is to make men virtuous: And, to draw them by a *stronger* attraction, did not suit the genius of a rational Religion, whose objects were free Agents.

But the proper answer to this idle cavil arises from the explanation given above. To Instruct the world in *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* was but the *secondary* end of Christ's Mission. The FIRST and primary, was to become its SANCTIFICATION and REDEMPTION: *That* must needs be common to every Revelation coming from God; *This* is peculiar to the Christian: and *this*, as we have shewn, cannot possibly be frustrated, or rendered ineffectual.

To conclude from what hath been said: As we should not affect to pry into the nature of those things which God hath been pleased to withhold from our search, and to cover with the sacred veil of Mystery; so neither should we reject a Truth, expressly delivered, because we may not fully comprehend the whole reason on which it stands. In a word, as we should not venture to go on where the silence of Scripture directs us to stop; so neither should we presume to stop where, with so loud a voice, it commandeth us to go on.

The sum of all then is this: REASON biddeth us to keep a MEAN: The great Philosopher informeth us

* Div. Leg. Book iv. § 2.

that

that NATURE is not able to keep a MEAN *. What remains but that we fly to GRACE, which, the greater Apostle assures us, is able: for, *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities* †. Nor will there be any danger (when, in such a disposition, we apply to this *Guide of truth*) of abusing its credit by fanatical extremes; for, to *establish the heart with Grace*, the same Apostle informs us, is the only way to prevent our being *carried about with the divers and strange Doctrines* of Deceivers ‡.

* *Natura modum tenere nescia est.* BAC.

† Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Heb. xiii. 9.

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